**Prayer Service – Feast of the Epiphany**

*The figures of the three Wise Men may be brought forward and added to the crib at a suitable*

*time during the prayer service. It is also appropriate to sing O Come All Ye Faithful or*

*similar carols you wish to include, as today marks the conclusion the twelve days of Christmas.*

**Introduction**

We gather together today to celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany. On this day we remember the visit of the wise men to worship the baby Jesus. Tradition tells us that the wise men were named Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar and that they brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh for the new baby. It reminds us that Jesus was revealed to people who weren’t Jews as he was, but that he came for people of all cultures. Let us join with one another to celebrate this special day.

**Opening Prayer – choose from the options below**

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

Christ has appeared among us. **Come, let us adore Him.**

The precious gifts which the Magi brought to the Lord this day are threefold,

And they are signs of divine mysteries.

By the gold the power of the King is signified,

By frankincense His great priesthood,

By myrrh the burial of the Lord.

The Magi worshipped the Author of our salvation in the crib,

And of their treasures they brought to Him gifts of mystic nature.

Let us pray, O God,

By the leading of a star Thou revealed Thine only begotten Son

To the gentiles on this day;

Mercifully grant that we who know Thee by faith,

May be brought to contemplate the beauty of Thy majesty,

Through the same Jesus Christ Thy Son. **Alleluia.**

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God of Light and Love,

In this very moment the star still beckons.

Gather us and let the star call us in new ways

Of healing and hope,

Restoration and renewal,

As we discover again Christ’s call to discipleship. **Amen.**

**Penitential Rite**

(The reader stands in front of an unlit candle)

Sometimes we feel lost and even consumed by darkness.

We may even wonder if we are loveable.

Our actions can dim the value and worth of others, and ourselves.

(The reader lights the candle)

But in Christ, God has given us a new Light,

Kindling unconditional love for us,

And showing us a well-lit path to wholeness and forgiveness.

**Thanks be to God.**

**We listen to God’s Word**

**First Reading** A reading from the prophet Isaiah 60:1-6)

Jerusalem, stand up! Shine! Your new day is dawning. The glory of the Lord shines brightly on you. The earth and its people are covered with darkness, but the glory of the Lord is shining upon you. Nations and kings will come to the light of your dawning day.

The Lord said: “Open your eyes! Look around! Crowds are coming. Your sons are on their way from distant lands; your daughters are being carried like little children. When you see this, your faces will glow; your hearts will pound and swell with pride. Treasures from across the sea and the wealth of nations will be brought to you. Your country will be covered with caravans of young camels from Midian and Ephah. The people of Sheba will bring gold and spices in praise of me, the Lord.”

The Word of the Lord.

**Responsorial Psalm** Psalm 72

**Response:** Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.

O God, with your judgement endow the king,

and with your justice, the king’s son;

He shall govern your people with justice

and your afflicted ones with judgement. **Response.**

Justice shall flower in his days,

and profound peace, till the moon be no more.

May he rule from sea to sea,

and from the River to the ends of the earth. **Response.**

The kings of Tarshish and the Isles shall offer gifts;

the kings of Arabia and Seba shall bring tribute.

All kings shall pay him homage,

all nations shall serve him. **Response.**

For he shall rescue the poor when he cries out,

and the afflicted when he has no one to help him.

He shall have pity for the lowly and the poor;

the lives of the poor he shall save. **Response.**

**Gospel Reading:** A reading from the Gospel according to Matthew (Matthew 2:1-12)

When Jesus was born in the village of Bethlehem in Judea, Herod was king. During this time some wise men from the east came to Jerusalem and said, “Where is the child bornto be king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.” When King Herod heard about this, he was worried, and so was everyone else in Jerusalem. Herod brought together the chief priests and the teachers of the Law of Moses and asked them, “Where will the Messiah be born?” They told him, “He will be born in Bethlehem, just as the prophet wrote, ‘Bethlehem in the land of Judea, you are very important among the towns of Judea. From your town will come a leader, who will be like a shepherd for my people Israel’.” Herod secretly called in the wise men and asked them when they had first seen the star. He told them, “Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, let me know. I want to go and worship him too.” The wise men listened to what the king said and then left. And the star they had seen in the east went on ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. They were thrilled and excited to see the star. When the men went into the house and saw the child with Mary, his mother, they knelt down and worshiped him. They took their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh and gave them to him. Later they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, and they went back home by another road.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Reflection on the Gospel – We Three Kings**

*This reflection may be read or sung*

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.

Born a king on Bethlehem’s plain,

Gold I bring to crown Him again,

King forever, ceasing never

Over us all to reign. (O star of wonder… if being sung)

Frankincense to offer have I.

Incense owns a deity nigh.

Prayer and praising all men raising,

Worship Him, God on high. (O star of wonder…)

Myrrh is mine: it’s bitter perfume

Breaths a life of gathering gloom.

Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,

Sealed in the stone-cold tomb. (O star of wonder…)

Glorious now behold Him arise,

King and God and Sacrifice.

Alleluia, alleluia!

Sounds through the earth and skies.

**Prayers of the Faithful**

1. We pray in thanksgiving for a happy and safe Christmas holiday. Lord hear us.
2. We pray for all those who found the season of Christmas difficult this year because they were lonely. Lord hear us.
3. We pray in thanksgiving for the gift of God’s creation: The moon, the stars, and the sun in the sky. May we always take care of God’s creation. Lord hear us.
4. We pray for our parents, teachers, priests and all those who help to show us the way to Jesus. Lord hear us.
5. We pray for all families who are rejoicing at the birth of new babies at this time. We ask Mary to watch over them and to bless them. Lord hear us.

We remember all those everywhere who, now that Christmas is over, have returned home or to work or to school. We ask God to be with them as we pray:

**The Lord’s Prayer/Ár nÁthair**

**Concluding Prayer**

Loving God, may you reveal to us and others,

The Light that is Jesus.

And may this Light lead us on

Into new and challenging ways of serving.

We make this prayer through Christ Our Lord. **Amen.**

**Closing Song:** *Christ be Our Light*