

twelvebaskets

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EPIPHANY SUNDAY C

5th January 2025

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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Opening Prayers

God of new beginnings, I come to you now, at the start of this new year.
Come into the opportunities,
Hold me in the challenges,
Travel with me each day, I pray.

Reflecting on the story I have heard again in recent weeks, I bring myself in worship.

Through Mary – teach me to be a willing servant of your call on my life. To step out in faith and trust in ways that I have not contemplated before.

Through Joseph – show me how to become a risk taker, ready to follow your will.

Through the Angels – encourage me to proclaim that you are God, so that all may hear the message.

Through the Shepherds – teach me humility and a quiet sense of confidence in the reality of your love for me and the truth behind the babe in the manger, no matter how excluded I might sometimes feel.

Through the Magi – teach me to be a searcher. Always looking for the real truth. Always willing to explore new pathways and track down fresh ideas.

Lord this scene of many facets draws me to a place of mystery and wonder for this is more than just a baby – human and divine.

Amen.

You may now wish to say the Lord's Prayer in a version or translation with which you are familiar.

Reading: Matthew 2:1-12 – [Click for reading](#)

Reflections on the reading

This is the season of the Feast of the Epiphany and today is Epiphany Sunday, a time when we remember the arrival of the Magi (often depicted as three wise men, though there is no Biblical evidence of them being men, or their being three of them, and only a few hints to suggest they might have been especially wise!)

With that in mind, why not read (or listen to) T S Eliot's famous poem called The Journey of the Magi: <https://poetryarchive.org/poem/journey-magi/>

It touches on many key themes and is a poem that deserves (perhaps even demands) a second or third read-through...but as you read it, is there anything in particular that sticks out to you? Any lines or images or thoughts that you find helpful, or difficult? Pay attention to those...

In case there is nothing in particular you want to focus, reflect and pray about, then allow us to draw your attention to these two lines:

'with the voices singing in our ears, saying that all this was folly.'

I wonder how often the journey of faith feels like this – a pursuit across miles and miles following the suggestion of a star, and all the voices of reason, of commercialism, of profit, of return on investment, of science...can seem to say 'this is folly'. But, as with the Magi's story – what none of those voices can even begin to describe for us is the remarkable encounter with the Christ-child.

May that encounter be real for you this epiphany, and beyond.

Responding in prayer

God of new starts,

As I begin my journey into this new year, I know that you are journeying with me.

I know that I have received so much, and I give thanks for all that you have given to me – help me to remember that all is gift, all is grace.

At the beginning of this new year, come by your grace, to set free the oppressed, to heal the wounds, to give a fresh start to those who feel weary.

Help me to hear your still small voice – prompting and reminding us to be a part of the change I want to see in the world.

Amen.

Responding in music

81 STF – Now thank we all our God - [YouTube](#)

Blessing

I come to the manger-side, this Christmas, like the magi.

I seek to taste of the joy of the encounter with the Messiah.

I bring my gifts, and hope they will be acceptable in your sight, O Lord.

Amongst the uncertainty of all that 2025 will hold for me, incarnate God, help me to remember that you travel with me, always.

Amen.

Prayers and Prayer Pointers

Monday 6th January

- The Feast of Epiphany
- Today is the day when Christians around the world celebrate the journey and arrival of the Magi, the 'wise men' from the Christmas story.
- Today you could pray for all people who are 'on a journey', particularly those who have been forced to flee their homes and are living as refugees or internally displaced people. Pray for organisations and churches seeking to work with them, to support those most in need.

Tuesday 7th January

- Pray for people affected by homelessness, those who are rough sleeping on the streets, but also the 'hidden majority' of homeless people who are sofa-surfing or in unstable housing situations.
- Pray for organisations working to support people with their housing, perhaps you are aware of some that are working locally to you.
- As you pray, listen for any promptings or invitation from God for you to do something in response. Are you able to make a donation, to volunteer sometime, to sign up to support a campaign on better housing policies in the UK?

Wednesday 8th January

- Consider how God is love, and where there is love, there is God.
- Leave a note, or send a text message, to tell somebody you love them or you're grateful for them. Pray for them as you write.

Thursday 9th January

- Today let us give thanks for the Methodist Church in Britain's relationship with the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe, and join with them in celebrating some of the successes of this global partnership.
- You might like to have a read of this and use it as a trigger for prayer: <https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/global-relationships/all-global-relationships-news/mcb-salt-fellowship-funds-enables-landmark-gender-achievement-in-zimbabwe/>

Friday 10th January

- Sit silently for ten minutes and let your mind wander. Offer any thoughts and feelings to God.

Saturday 11th January

- Throughout this year, the Methodist Church is hosting 'Wholehearted Monthly', an online space for people to come together to talk and reflect about God's mission and our part in it.
- Could you pray for those who are planning, and signing up to, these events, and consider if you or someone you know would like to be part of the conversation too?
- <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/wholehearted-monthly-tickets-1082365166349?aff=global>