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EPIPHANY 4A

1st February 2026

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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Opening Prayers

Lord of fresh starts and new beginnings,
At the start of this new month,
Show me how to start again, show me how to love you and follow in your way,
This and every day.

And as I come to this space today to praise you, O God, I acknowledge that I sometimes feel like I am carrying the burdens of this earthly world.

[space for quiet reflection]

Loving God, thank you that I can come to you, trusting that your grace makes me whole again.

I worship you in the gladness of being a new person each day.

Let everything that has breath sing praises to God!

Let all creation praise God, and today, let it begin with me.

Amen.

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

Reading: Matthew 5:1-12 – [Click for reading](#)

Responding to the reading

Jesus begins his most famous sermon not with rules or commands, but with blessings. And not the kind of blessings the world usually gives.

Blessed are the poor in spirit.

Blessed are those who mourn.

Blessed are the meek.

Blessed are the peacemakers.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.

This is not a list of goals. It's not a to-do list for spiritual success. It's a radical reimagining of where God's favour is found. In a world that glorifies strength, status, and self-sufficiency, Jesus blesses the broken-hearted, the humble, the merciful, the justice-seekers.

He blesses those the world overlooks.

For us, today, the Beatitudes can offer both comfort and challenge. They comfort us with the reminder that God is near to the hurting. That holiness isn't reserved for the powerful or pious, but found in ordinary lives marked by vulnerability and hope.

But they also challenge us:

- To look again at who we consider "blessed."
- To resist the pull of ego and status.

- To stand in solidarity with those the world pushes aside.
- To hunger not just for peace, but for justice, even when it costs us something.

In the Beatitudes, Jesus doesn't promise an easy life. But he promises that God is with us in the struggle – that the kingdom of heaven belongs to those who refuse to give up on love, even when the world makes it hard.

So, as you reflect today, consider:

- Where in your life are you being called to hunger for justice, even if it disrupts your comfort?
- Who around you is mourning, or poor in spirit, and how can you embody blessing for them?
- Which of these blessings do you most long to receive, and which do you resist?

The Beatitudes are not a ladder to climb, but a lens to see the world anew. A way of life that turns the values of empire upside down and insists that God's kingdom is already breaking in: through the meek, the merciful, and the peacemakers.

May we live the blessing Jesus speaks. And may we recognise it, even when it comes in unexpected forms.

Hymn:

255 STF – The kingdom of God is justice and joy – [YouTube](#)

Blessing

Go from this place, with the peace of Christ flowing through you, out into the world around.
Go from this moment, with the radical grace of the Spirit overflowing from you, into the world and society around you.

Go from this day, with the energy of the Creator in your body, mind and soul.
Go in peace, for God goes with you.

Amen.

Prayers and Prayer Pointers For This Week

Monday 2nd February

- Find 5 small pebbles, stones or shells. Take a large bowl and fill it with water. Wash each pebble, stone or shell in the water in turn and, for each one, share with God any worries or concerns you have at the moment. After you have washed each one, let it sink to the bottom of the glass or bowl and give this worry or concern over to God as you watch it do so.

Tuesday 3rd February

- Today, consider all plants and flowers you see growing around you (either in a garden, local community or houseplants). Take time to look closely at the shape of the leaves and petals. Really look at the colours and patterns you can see. As you do so, reflect on the beauty of the natural world and thank God for all that it holds.
- If you do not have access to plants in this way, you might like to use photographs.

Wednesday 4th February

- Play your favourite piece of music. As you listen, reflect on all that you have or have had that you are grateful for. Give thanks to God.

Thursday 5th February

- Take time out today to sit still outside (or open a window). As you do so, consider any smells there are around you. Do this for 5 minutes, closing your eyes and breathing deeply and steadily as you do so. Allow all that you can smell (or can't smell) to simply be there.
- As you do this, reflect on the way in which God is all around us, even though we cannot always sense them or see them.

Friday 6th February

- On this day in 1958, eight Manchester United football players and 15 other passengers were killed in the Munich air disaster.
- Let us pray for all who are affected by disaster striking, and all involved in trying to make the world a safer place.

Saturday 7th February

- Today is the Christian feast day of Richard the Pilgrim (who died in 720).
- Today, let your prayers go to all who are pilgrims – those who literally travel to seek meaning, depth and the divine, and all of us who are on a metaphorical journey of spirituality and growth.
- Pray for your next step on the journey, and all who must take a brave step today, especially if there is anyone known to you.