

The Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin
Ross-on-Wye

An Epiphany Carol Service



Sunday 11th January 2026 at 6.00 pm



Welcome to this evening's service. While you may have taken down your cards and Christmas decorations, the longer season of Christmas continues in the Church, all the way to Candlemas on 2nd February. You might like to join us for another great celebration on Sunday 1st February at 6.00pm.

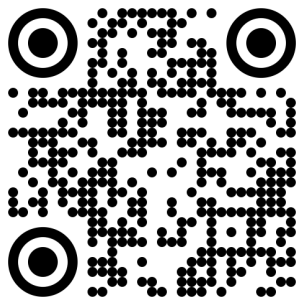
Tonight, we celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany. We begin with the most obvious manifestation of that: the visit of the Wise Men to the baby Jesus. But the Epiphany season, which lasts from now until 2nd February, includes more and we will also consider the Baptism of Christ and the first miracle in Cana. We end with a dedication of ourselves to Christ's service at the beginning of a New Year.

Our music this evening includes the New Year Carol by Benjamin Britten, the 50th anniversary of whose death musicians will be commemorating this year, and a hymn by Robert Willis, Dean of Canterbury and previously Hereford, who died last year.

This is a *Come, Sing & Sup* service, we aim to hold two or three of these services each year. More details about how you can be involved will be found at <https://rossparishes.uk/come-sing>



If you use a hearing aid, we have an excellent hearing loop; please switch to the T position if you have one or adjust setting in your app.



Our lighting this evening will mean that you will find it easier to view this order of service, backlit on your phone.

You can do that by showing this QR code to your phone's camera then following the link.

Cover picture: detail of the 1926 "Money-Kyrle window" by C E Kempe on the north wall of the chancel. Photograph by Paul Cummings.

ORDER OF SERVICE

After the welcome please stand, as the ministers enter, to join in the hymn:

Opening Hymn

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
Ever more be led to thee.

As they offered gifts most rare
At thy cradle 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.

As with joyful steps they sped,
Saviour, to thy lowly bed,
There to bend the knee before
Thee whom Heaven and Earth adore,
So may we with willing feet
Ever seek thy mercy seat.

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 forever may we sing
Alleluias to our King.

Words: Cecil Frances Alexander (1818 - 1895)

Harmony: Arthur Henry Mann (1850 - 1925)
v6 arr. Stephen Cleobury (1948 - 2019)

All remain standing for the

Bidding Prayer

Beloved in Christ, as we gather in wonder and awe at the manifestation of our Lord's coming among us: let us hear in Holy Scripture of revelation through sign and miracle, let us join our voices with the worship of the choirs of angels, let us dedicate our lives once again to the service of Christ, and let us bring to him also the needs of the world he came to save.

We pray for those who, like the wise men, travel in strange lands, for refugees and all who are forced from their homes by the inhumanity of greed, oppression and war. We pray for those who, like the crowds at the Jordan, seek after understanding and faith, and for our own pilgrimage through this earthly realm, that we may come at the last into the inheritance of the saints who show us the way to everlasting life, light and glory. We pray for those who, like the guests at Cana, celebrate the joy of human love, but we remember also those who suffer loneliness, grief or pain.

These prayers and praises let us humbly offer up to the throne of heaven, in the words which Christ himself hath 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 Christ who sends us to the nations, give us the power of his Spirit. **Amen**

Remain seated while the choir sings the

Carol

We three kings of orient are
Bearing gifts we traverse afar
Field and fountain
Moor and mountain
Following yonder star:

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*

Myrrh is mine its bitter perfume
Breathes a life of gathering gloom.
Sorrowing, sighing,
bleeding, dying
Sealed in the stone-cold tomb.

Born a King on Bethlehem plain,
Gold I bring to crown him again
King for ever,
Ceasing never,
Over us all to reign.

Glorious now behold him arise
King and God and sacrifice
Heaven sings Alleluia,
Alleluia
The earth replies.

Words: John Henry Hopkins (1792 – 1868)

Music: Ian Wicks

Remain seated for the

First Lesson – Matthew 2.1-12

The visit of the Wise Men

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.

Thanks be to God

All sit for the

Carol

Three kings from Persian lands afar
To Jordan follow the pointing star:
And this the quest of the travellers three,
Where the new-born King of the Jews may be.
Full royal gifts they bear for the King:
Gold, incense, myrrh are their offering

*How brightly shines
the morning star!
With grace and truth
from heav'n afar
Our Jesse tree
now bloweth.*

The star shines out with a steadfast ray;
The kings to Bethlehem make their way,
And there in worship they bend the knee,
As Mary's child in her lap they see;
Their royal gifts they show to the King;
Gold, incense, myrrh are their offering.

*Of Jacob's stem
and David's line,
For thee, my Bridegroom,
King divine,
My soul with love
o'erfloweth.*

Thou child of man, lo, to Bethlehem,
The kings are travelling, travel with them!
The star of mercy, the star of grace,
Shall lead thy heart to its resting-place.
Gold, incense, myrrh thou canst not bring;
Offer thy heart to the infant King.

*Thy word,
Jesu,
inly feeds us,
Rightly leads us,
life bestowing.
Praise, O praise such love
o'erflowing.*

Words and Music: Peter Cornelius (1824-74)

Chorale text: Philipp Nicolai (1556-1608)

Arranged: Ivor Atkins (1869-1953)

All stand to join in with the

Hymn

O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness!
Bow down before him, his glory proclaim;
With gold of obedience, and incense of lowliness,
Kneel and adore him, the Lord is his Name!

Low at his feet lay thy burden of carefulness,
High on his heart he will bear it for thee,
Comfort thy sorrows, and answer thy prayerfulness,
Guiding thy steps as may best for thee be.

Fear not to enter his courts in the slenderness
Of the poor wealth thou wouldst reckon as thine:
Truth in its beauty, and love in its tenderness,
These are the offerings to lay on his shrine.

These, though we bring them in trembling and fearfulness,
He will accept for the name that is dear;
Mornings of joy give for evenings of tearfulness,
Trust for our trembling and hope for our fear.

O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness!
Bow down before him, his glory proclaim;
With gold of obedience, and incense of lowliness,
Kneel and adore him, the Lord is his Name!

Words: J S B Monsell (1811-75)

Tune: WAS LEBET

All sit for the

Second Lesson – Mark 1.4,5,7-11

The Baptism of Jesus

John the Baptist 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. 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.'

Thanks be to God

Remain seated for the

Carol

"When he is king we will give him the king's gifts,
Myrrh for its sweetness, and gold for a crown,
Beautiful robes", said the young girl to Joseph
Fair with her first-born on Bethlehem Down.

Bethlehem Down is full of the starlight
Winds for the spices, and stars for the gold,
Mary for sleep, and for lullaby music
Songs of a shepherd by Bethlehem fold.

When He is King they will clothe Him in grave-sheets,
Myrrh for embalming, and wood for a crown,
He that lies now in the white arms of Mary
Sleeping so lightly on Bethlehem Down.

Here He has peace and a short while for dreaming,
Close-huddled oxen to keep Him from cold,
Mary for love, and for lullaby music
Songs of a shepherd by Bethlehem fold.

Words: Bruce Blunt (1899-1957)

Music: Peter Warlock (1894-1930)

All stand to join in with the

Hymn

**Hail to the Lord's Anointed!
Great David's greater Son;
Hail, in the time appointed,
His reign on earth begun!
He comes to break oppression,
To set the captive free,
To take away transgression,
And rule in equity.**

**He comes with succour speedy
To those who suffer wrong;
To help the poor and needy,
And bid the weak be strong;
To give them songs for sighing,
Their darkness turn to light,
Whose souls, condemned and dying,
Were precious in his sight.**

**He shall come down like showers
Upon the fruitful earth,
And love, joy, hope, like flowers,
Spring in his path to birth:
Before him, on the mountains,
Shall peace the herald go;
And righteousness in fountains,
From hill to valley flow.**

**Kings shall fall down before him,
And gold and incense bring;
All nations shall adore him,
His praise all people sing;
To him shall prayer unceasing
And daily vows ascend;
His kingdom still increasing,
A kingdom without end.**

Words: James Montgomery (1771-1854)

Tune: CRÜGER

Third Lesson – John 2.1-11

The wedding at Cana

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.

Thanks be to God

Please stand while the choir sings, and the high altar is censed:

Magnificat

My soul doth magnify the Lord: and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.
For he hath regarded: the lowliness of his handmaiden.
For behold, from henceforth: all generations shall call me blessed.
For he that is mighty hath magnified me: and holy is his Name.
And his mercy is on them that fear him: throughout all generations.
He hath shewed strength with his arm:
he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
He hath put down the mighty from their seat:
and hath exalted the humble and meek.
He hath filled the hungry with good things: and the rich he hath sent empty away.
He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel:
as he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed for ever.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Music: Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924)

All remain standing to join in with the

Hymn

**Love spoke the word and by that word
Pure water turned to wine,
Creating at the wedding feast
Love's first redemptive sign.
For by that sign of water changed
Humanity was blessed,
Able to share the self-same love
Through Love the wedding guest.**

**Love saw the need when wine ran dry
The wine cup to refill,
Met human need with his own life
And meets that longing still.
For as at Cana on that day
Two human lives were blessed
So richest blessings we receive
From Love the wedding guest.**

**Love joins the feast to celebrate
Where love is freely given,
Creating from our human love
The quality of heaven.
So shall our life and love mature
Like wine pronounced the best,
Transformed to that which is divine
By Love the wedding guest.**

Words: Robert Willis (1947-2025)
Dean of Hereford 1991-2001

Tune: COE FEN

All sit for the

An Act of Dedication

In the light of Christ's Epiphany, the Heavens are opened by the Father's love; the ordinary things of earth are transformed as a sign of the richness of heaven; and the people of far-off nations are brought together in the unity of the worship of Christ.

So let us pray,

Lord Jesus Christ, honoured by the gifts of the wise men,

Strengthen us to offer our lives in your service.

Lord Jesus Christ, shown to the world as Son of God at the Jordan,

Strengthen us to preach the Gospel to all the nations.

Lord Jesus Christ, revealed to the disciples by the new wine of Cana,

Strengthen us to believe in your generosity towards us.

Remain seated for the

New Year Carol

Here we bring new water from the well so clear,

For to worship God with, this happy New Year.

Sing levy-dew, sing levy-dew, the water and the wine,

The seven bright gold wires and the bugles that do shine.

Sing reign of Fair Maid, with gold upon her toe;

Open you the West Door and turn the Old Year go.

Sing reign of Fair Maid, with gold upon her chin;

Open you the East Door and let the New Year in.

Words: Anon

Music: Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

This year is the 50th anniversary of Britten's death

Prayers and Collect

God our Redeemer, whose Son is revealed to us in this season as Messiah and Lord, open our eyes to see him at work in our lives, that we may draw close to you in adoration, that we may be joyful in our faith, and that we may bring the truth of the Gospel to an eager and longing world, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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. **Amen.**

During this hymn a collection is taken. Please stand:

Hymn

**Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,
Dawn on our darkness, and lend us thine aid;
Star of the East, the horizon adorning,
Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.**

**Cold on his cradle the dewdrops are shining,
Low lies his head with the beasts of the stall;
Angels adore him in slumber reclining,
Maker and Monarch and Saviour of all.**

**Say shall we yield him, in costly devotion,
Odours of Edom, and offerings divine?
Gems of the mountain, and pearls of the ocean,
Myrrh from the forest, and gold from the mine?**

**Vainly we offer each ample oblation,
Vainly with gifts would his favour secure;
Richer by far is the heart's adoration,
Dearer to God are the prayers of the poor.**

**Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,
Dawn on our darkness, and lend us thine aid;
Star of the East, the horizon adorning,
Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.**

Remain standing for the

Blessing

Christ the Son of God perfect in you the image of his glory and gladden your hearts with the good news of his kingdom;

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

Organ Voluntary