

LITURGY FOR THE SEASON OF EPIPHANY

PREPARATION

This past year, we found ourselves
on a different road,
**yet we still look for that Baby
born long ago in Bethlehem.**

This year, we are worshipping
in different ways,
**yet we still look for that
Child of Christmas
who gifts the needy with hope,
who sets free the oppressed.**

This year, we gather
in different places,
**yet we still long to find
the One who has come for us,
even as we remain apart
from those we love so much.**

Words of Welcome

PRAYER OF APPROACH

Gladly, O God, we come together,
to seek your deeper presence in the silence.

Silence

We bring before you
our wounds and our weariness
from the journey.

**Together we look
with hopeful expectation
to find the star
which signals your arrival.**

Thankfully, we come forward
to kneel and to receive
the glory of your presence.

**With our little gifts
we are humbled before you.**

And we find among the straw,
in the misty breath of the animals,
**that you have come more humanly
than we could imagine. Amen.**

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

O God who travels with us in the shadows,
you know who we are.
We long for life which is full and free.
We long to know the truth
and we want to leave behind us
all the things which hold us back.

Silent reflection

We want to move forward in faith
but the way seems so dangerous
and we stand in helpless fear
before that which is hidden in our past
and in our future.

Silent reflection

Stand before us, gentle Christ.
Walk before us, brave Jesus.
Call us on into life, Holy Spirit.
Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

My friends, Epiphany is good news!
The Light comes not to sear and blind us but to save us.
Christ Jesus came into this world to save sinners.

In his name I declare to you: Your sins are forgiven!

Thanks be to God!

Take up your forgiveness with thanksgiving,
and live without shame or anxiety.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ enables us. Amen!

READING

Matthew 2: 1-15a

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.

Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.' Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod.

REFLECTION

TRAVELLING ON

When hope invites us to journey
elusive, beckoning onward
but never in our grasp:

**God of wisdom and promise
give us courage to travel on.**

When dreams glimmer in the distance,
fading, clouded and hidden
or shining with new brightness:

**God of wisdom and promise
give us courage to travel on.**

When established patterns collapse
into the uncertainty of the unknown
and security dissolves into a memory:

**God of wisdom and promise
give us courage to travel on.**

When we think our journey has ended
in the star-lit glow
only to find the end is a new beginning:

**God of wisdom and promise
give us courage to travel on.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

*Rejoicing in the presence of God here among us,
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.***

NEW ROADS

When the star had stopped
and they had seen the baby
they took a new road.

When the decorations come down
and we have heard the story
we can take a new road.

New roads can be scary.
New roads can be exciting.
New roads are risky.
It is time to go.

Star-maker,
Light-bringer,
Holy Spirit of adventure,
come with us as we continue on our road. **Amen.**

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