

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2022

'We Saw His Star in the East'



Words of welcome from the Chair

Leader Brothers and sisters, we are united today with fellow believers throughout the world as we gather to pray for the visible unity of the Church. We do this with worship resources prepared by the Middle East Council of Churches. Our theme is inspired by the visit of the Magi to the new-born King, as described in the Gospel according to Saint Matthew: "We observed his star in the East and have come to pay him homage." Let us fix our eyes on the star that was seen in the East and allow it to lead us too.

Let us come into God's presence in solidarity with all who are sick, suffering, marginalized, displaced and oppressed, knowing that our darkness can be dispelled by God's light. As we pray today for the unity of the Church, may we all journey together to meet Jesus the Saviour, the light of the world.

Glory be to you Father Almighty, for you have revealed yourself through your creation and invite all people to gather in your presence. We have seen the star of Jesus in our lives and have come to worship him just as the Magi did. We offer him ourselves today and we ask for the presence of the Holy Spirit among us.

All **Unite us as we come to worship the king, all glorious above. Amen.**

Hymn O worship the King, all glorious above;
O gratefully sing His power and His love;
Our shield and defender, the Ancient of Days,
Pavilioned in splendour and girded with praise.

O tell of His might, O sing of His grace,
Whose robe is the light, whose canopy space;
His chariots of wrath the deep thunderclouds form,
And dark is His path on the wings of the storm.

The earth with its store of wonders untold,
Almighty, Thy power hath founded of old,
Hath 'stablished it fast by a changeless decree,
And round it hath cast, like a mantle, the sea.

Thy bountiful care what tongue can recite?
It breathes in the air, it shines in the light,
It streams from the hills, it descends to the plain,
And sweetly distils in the dew and the rain.

Frail children of dust and feeble as frail,
In Thee do we trust, nor find Thee to fail;
Thy mercies how tender, how firm to the end,
Our maker, defender, redeemer and friend.

O measureless might! Ineffable love!
While angels delight to hymn Thee above,
The humbler creation, though feeble their lays,
With true adoration shall sing to Thy praise.

Robert Grant (1779-1838)

--- This section to be led by Wetherby Methodist ---

Prayer of Praise and Confession

Leader We glorify you, O Lord, creator of heaven and earth, for you have set the lights in the vault of the sky. You separated light from darkness and arranged signs to mark sacred times, and days and years. You studded the firmament with stars. How majestic are your works, the heavens declare your glory and the skies proclaim the work of your hands!

All We glorify you, O Lord.

Leader We praise you for you did not abandon us despite our rebellion but sent your Son to brighten our darkness and be our light and our salvation. In him was life, and that life was the light of all humanity. And the light shines in the darkness.

All We praise you, O Lord.

Leader We worship you, O Lord, for you accompany us in the chaos of our life through the power of your Holy Spirit. You light up our paths and give us wisdom and faith in a world of untruth and doubt.

All We worship you, O Lord.

Leader We thank you, O Lord, for you send us into the world to witness to this light, in our various churches and diverse cultures, and to

proclaim the Good News to Jesus, the one true King, offering ourselves to him.

All We thank you, O Lord.

Leader May all the peoples bow before you and worship you. We have often preferred darkness, but you have given us light. Therefore, we come to you confessing our sins and saying:

All We confess that we have turned from your ways.

We have harmed your good creation through our greed.

We have polluted and poisoned the air, earth and waters, destroying habitats and species.

Leader Lord have mercy

All Christ have mercy

All We have acted selfishly towards our brothers and sisters. We have put our own needs and desires above our commitment to justice. We have built walls between us and planted seeds of mistrust.

Leader Lord have mercy

All Christ have mercy

All We have divided people based on ethnicity and culture, discriminating instead of celebrating difference. We have waged war, claiming Jesus for our side.

Leader Lord have mercy

All Christ have mercy

All Forgive all these thoughts and deeds, O Lord, as we come before you in repentance.

Leader Lord have mercy

All Christ have mercy

Leader Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom you have sent in the fullness of time to redeem all people, we ask you to have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and transform us into his glorious image so we can shine as a beacon of hope in our troubled world.

Leader Lord have mercy

All Christ have mercy

Leader Almighty God hears our prayers, has mercy on us and forgives our sins.

All **Thanks be to God, whom we praise with all our voices.**

--- This section to be led by St Joseph's ---

Psalm 8 (responsively)

Leader O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!
You have set your glory above the heavens.

All **Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a safe place, to silence the enemy and the avenger.**

Leader When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established;

All **What are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?**

Leader Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honour.

All **You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet,**

Leader all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

All **O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!**

--- This section to be led by Wetherby Baptist ---

Gospel reading – Matthew 2:1-12 (NIVUK)

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, 'Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.'

When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. 'In Bethlehem in Judea,' they replied, 'for this is what the prophet has written: "But you, Bethlehem, in

the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.”

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, ‘Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.’

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

--- This section to be led by St James ---

Nicene Creed (according to the tradition of the Eastern churches)

Leader Let us take encouragement from our common faith, proclaiming words which have resounded in the Church for centuries:

All: We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father,

**who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Guest Speaker: Mark Screeton, Executive Director, In2Out

Churches Together in Wetherby, Linton & Collingham AGM

(Apology sheet, Activity and Financial Reports, Minutes of previous AGM available at door)

1. Welcome and Apologies – Chair
2. Minutes of previous AGM (21st January 2021) – Chair
3. Annual Report – Chair
4. Financial Report (including recommendation for suggested financial contribution from churches) – Treasurer
5. Election of officers
6. Date of next AGM (19th January 2023)

--- This section to be led by St Oswald's ---

Prayers of Intercession

Leader With faith and confidence, we come in prayer, before God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit:

The Magi came from the East to pay homage and offer special gifts from their cultures and countries. We pray today for all Christian communities around the world in their diversity of worship and tradition: Lord, we ask you to preserve these treasures, particularly in areas of the world where the presence and survival of the Church is threatened by violence and oppression.

All O, Lord, hear our prayer

Leader The early years of the Lord's life were marked by violence and massacres at the orders of the despot Herod.
We pray for children living in places in the world where violence continues and where its results are tangible. Strengthen, O Lord, the bonds of unity and mutual love among our churches and help us to cooperate and witness to your holy Name. Inspire us to work without

ceasing in order to defend the oppressed and include the marginalized. Encourage us to stand together in the face of tyranny and oppressive regimes as we seek your Kingdom among us.

All O, Lord, hear our prayer

Leader After the visit of the Magi, the holy family experienced migration through the wilderness and became refugees in the land of Egypt. We pray for all the refugees and uprooted people in this world: Equip us, Lord, to show hospitality to those driven from their homes, and grant us the spirit of welcome to those looking for a safe haven.

All O, Lord, hear our prayer

Leader The birth of Jesus was good news for all, gathering people from different nations and religions in worship of the holy child. We pray for our efforts to seek harmony and dialogue with other religions: Lord, give us humility and patience to walk with others with respect on their journey.

All O, Lord, hear our prayer

Leader The Magi returned to their home by a different way. We pray for our churches in this changing world: Lord, help us to find new and creative ways to follow you and to witness to you so that the world may believe.

All O, Lord, hear our prayer

Leader When the Magi saw the holy child, they rejoiced with great joy. Heavenly Father, fix our eyes on him so we do not lose our way. Unite us in the Lord Jesus, who is the way, the truth, and the life, and who has taught us to pray, saying:

**All Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be Your name,
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are Yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

--- This section to be led by Chair ---

Leader Go now and live as children of light.

All For the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true.

Leader Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness.

All Let us wake from sleep and Christ will shine upon us.

Leader Peace be to the whole community, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all who have an undying love for our Lord Jesus Christ.

All Amen. Thanks be to God.

Hymn Lord, the light of your love is shining,
In the midst of the darkness, shining;
Jesus, Light of the World, shine upon us,
Set us free by the truth you now bring us.
Shine on me, shine on me.

*Shine, Jesus, shine, fill this land with the Father's glory;
Blaze, Spirit, blaze, set our hearts on fire.
Flow, river, flow, flood the nations with grace and mercy;
Send forth your Word, Lord, and let there be light.*

Lord, I come to your awesome presence,
From the shadows into your radiance;
By the blood I may enter your brightness,
Search me, try me, consume all my darkness.
Shine on me, shine on me.

As we gaze on your kingly brightness
So our faces display your likeness.
Ever changing from glory to glory,
Mirrored here may our lives tell your story.
Shine on me, shine on me.