

HOLY TRINITY  
ANGLICAN CHURCH  
METCALFE, ON.

JANUARY 9, 2022  
The Feast Of  
Epiphany

Reverend  
Michael Fleming



Celebrant: As we gather this new day to remember those who followed the Star of Life and Light, we acknowledge that our parish sits on the unceded territory of the Ashanabee Algonquian peoples.

People: **May we walk together in the spirit of reconciliation, trust and hope.**

Celebrant: As we kneel before the Lord of lords and King of kings, we receive from God the gift of his peace.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

People: **And also with you.**

Celebrant: The story is out! Jesus Christ, Light of the world, has been born to dispel the darkness that covers its people. God's glory appears in human form and life on earth will never be the same again! Father God, the Star that led the Magi to the place where He was, announced to the world that the Saviour had been born.

Today we live on a world that is still covered by darkness, and still needing to make the journey to the stable door. May our lives reflect your Light day by day, as we seek to serve where you have placed us so that we might be the means through which others can enter Jesus. Amen

People: **Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth. Lord God, heavenly king, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

Celebrant: Eternal God who by a star led Magi to the worship of your Son, guide by your Spirit and your light the nations of the earth, that the whole world might know your

glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen

The First Reading: ISAIAH 60:1-6

“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

“Lift up your eyes and look about you: All assemble and come to you; your sons come from afar, and your daughters are carried on the hip. Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy; the wealth on the seas will be brought to you, to you the riches of the nations will come.

Herds of camels will cover your land, young camels of Midian and Ephah.

And all from Sheba will come, bearing gold and incense and proclaiming the praise of the Lord.

The Word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

People: **Blessed are you, Holy God, in Jesus Christ your Light shines in the world and darkness cannot overcome it. Blessed are you, God of Light. Shine in our lives with the Light of Christ so that we might give you praise through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen**

Psalm 72: 1-14 Endow the king with your justice, O God, the royal son with your righteousness.

**May he judge your people in righteousness, your afflicted ones with justice.**

May the mountains bring prosperity to the people, the hills the fruit of righteousness.

**May he defend the afflicted among the people and save the children of the needy; may he crush the oppressor.**

May he endure as long as the sun,  
as long as the moon, through all generations.

**May he be like rain falling on a mown field, like showers watering the earth.**

In his days may the righteous flourish and prosperity abound till the moon is no more.

**May he rule from sea to sea  
and from the River to the ends of the earth.**

May the desert tribes bow before him and his enemies lick the dust.

**May the kings of Tarshish and of distant shores bring tribute to him. May the kings of Sheba and Seba present him gifts.**

May all kings bow down to him and all nations serve him.

**For he will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help.**

He will take pity on the weak and the needy and save the needy from death.

**He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for precious is their blood in his sight.**

A Reading from Ephesians 3: 1-12

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles— Surely you have heard about the administration of God’s grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God’s holy apostles and prophets.

This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God’s grace given me through the working of his power. Although I am less than the least of all the Lord’s people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ, and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.

His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.

The Word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

Celebrant: We gather wondering, “Where shall we find the babe born in Bethlehem?” We will find the babe in the laughter of children, in the wisdom of grandparents. We gather asking, “Where will we find the Child of Christmas?” We will find the Christmas child where the needy are gifted with hope and where the oppressed are set free.

We gather wanting to know, “Where will we find the Child who has come to us?” We will find our Hope where fear is overwhelmed by grace, where hatred is overwhelmed by love and where all peoples are overwhelmed by joy. Amen.

Holy Gospel

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

All: **And also with you.**

Celebrant: The Holy Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ according to the blessed St. Matthew (St. Matthew 2:1-12)

All: **Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

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 worshiped 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.

Celebrant: The Gospel of Christ.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

## Homily

### Influencers

One of the more disturbing things I've seen in a long while was the news clips this week about the group of young people who chartered a Westwings airplane to party in Mexico over new years. I have no problem with them doing THAT, but I found their behaviour on board not only infantile but dangerous. I say dangerous because they were identified in the news item as "influencers" which means that many, many people who follow the Internet might somehow be convinced by their behaviour that it's all right to break all the rules in order to do whatever you want at any time and in any place, regardless of consequences or how one's actions will affect others..

I had not heard of the word "influencer" until recently and was a bit confused as to both what it meant and how one became one. So, I looked it up on Google and found that an influencer is defined as a person who has the power to affect the decisions of others because of his or her authority, knowledge or relationship with his or her audience. He or she has a following in a distinctive niche and the size of the following varies according to the whims of the audience attracted to them in the first place. Manufacturers actually pay megabucks to many of them to flaunt their products and influence others to patronize whatever is being pushed. Some are macro-influencers and are usually persons who made their fame from film or sport or music or business or politics, while others are micro-influencers who gain their audience because of the

particular niche they inhabit or the cause they support. Influencers can be either forces for good or instruments of darkness and it all depends on whether you as a follower support their particular worldview or not. This is a particular breed of person which I always assumed was created by the Internet for the Internet, but the more I think about it, the more I see that this has been a phenomena since the dawn of time. There have always been persons who, by virtue of what they do or say or who they are are able, willingly or inadvertently, to change the course of peoples' lives.

Today, we think of one group of such influencers in the Scriptures – the Magii who were influencers in the world of the first century. The problem is – we don't really know much about them. Where did they come from? - we don't really know save that they were from "the East"! Who or what were they-were not sure: they were perhaps astrologers or political advisors to a king or visionaries or scholars or magicians...or... How many were there that night in Bethlehem? – unknown. Matthew doesn't say and the only reason we think three is because of the hymn We Three Kings of Orient Are written in the 1860's, based on the imagination of one The Reverend J.H. Hopkins who based his story on the 2nd Century names of Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar given to the Magii by an early Church Father, Origen.. I suppose that, as fascinating as this exploration into the story of the Real Magii of the Middle East is, a new reality TV show, it really doesn't matter because what is important in the narrative is that they followed a star and were the first Gentiles to see the infant Jesus and recognize Him for who He truly was, the Messiah of the world..

There was something peculiar and particular about the night sky that they observed – the orientation of stars and planets and constellations were so unusual that they turned to the sacred texts of their religion to see if there was any explanation for what they were seeing and, apparently, there it was – according to Zoroastrian theology, the planetary display they saw was The sign that a powerful ruler was about to be born in the world and thus did they go off in search of that new king. They moved as the brightest star in the night sky did and rested during the daylight hours. They had no idea where they were going or how long the journey would be – all they understood was that, at the end of the journey, they would meet this king of kings and lord of lords. As they neared the great city of Jerusalem, they stopped at the palace of King Herod, assuming that the child would be his and would be born in the city. Imagine their surprise when they saw just how perplexed and upset Herod became as they revealed what the star revealed. They agreed to return to him after they had found the child and let him know where he was so that the king might likewise pay homage to his successor.

According to Matthew, they found Him in Bethlehem and paid him full reverence and offered gifts which were symbolic of all the power of the world – gold to represent political power, frankincense to indicate that this king would be lord over not only the

political reality but the religious life as well and myrrh to indicate that this child would be lord of both life and death.

Following their time with Mary, Joseph and the Child, they set forth to return to Jerusalem and share their story, but were told in a dream or vision of the intent of Herod to kill the child and thus, as Matthew writes, “they returned home by another way”. According to tradition, upon their return to their home and native land, they spent the rest of their lives telling others of their experience with the Child and thus were the first evangelists of the good news. This role for them had been foretold in the Hebrew Scriptures, in Isaiah and in the Psalms and when they died, the Emperor Zeno brought their bones to Constantinople where they were interred in the Hagia Sophia and today these relics find their resting place in the cathedral in Cologne Germany where they are honoured annually on the Feast of the Epiphany.

So much for the story. So, what does this narrative which at times seems almost fantastical, have to do with us? Well, as I see it you and I are inheritors of the story first told by these emissaries of the East. Like the Magii, we have followed a star and have seen the infant Jesus. Like the Magii, we have trusted in our hearts that what is said of Him is true: that God so loved the world that he gave His only Son so that all who trust in Him will have eternal joy and life in Him. We are the inheritors of the great commission which Jesus laid upon the shoulders of the fellowship that had gathered around him and the Word when he said, “Go into all the world and tell others of all that you have seen and heard” which Mark confirmed in the last line of his gospel: “Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere and the Lord worked in them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it”. We bear in our spiritual DNA the good news and are ordained each and every one of us through our baptism to be influencers in all the places we live and move. We are called, as Cursillo so rightly tells us, to evangelize our environments, not by long sermons or threats of divine judgment and punishment, but by the things we do and say that personify the gospel principles of justice, equity, right living and reverence for all creation.

Our aim as influencers is to simply share Jesus with others as best we can in ways that will want others to say, “I want to know more – take my hand will you and walk with me for a while”, like the Ethiopian said to Philip on that dusty road so so long ago. We are influencers....we are the good news. Alleluia!

Celebrant: Let us affirm our baptism as we say,

**I believe in God the Father Almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power  
of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.**

**He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.**

**He descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again.  
He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father  
He will come again  
to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen**

Reader: With the Magi, we seek God's glory; those moments when we are shown that God is with us. God who made us all, each wonderfully different, we pray for followers of different faiths across the world – give us grace to learn from each other. Lead all who seek you in ways of humility and peace. We pray for our Diocese of Ottawa, remembering especially today the Parish of South Dundas and their priest The Reverend Mark Lewis.

We pray for the lay staff of Ascension House: Heidi Fawcett, Ishita Ghose, Bill Gilbert, Sanjay Grover, Glenn Lockwood, Ringo Morella, Patricia Myles, Kiran Otto, Titilayo Oyefi, Heidi Pizzuto, Sandra Purdy, Safiyah Rochelle, Donna Rourke, Jane Scanlon and for all clergy under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Ottawa. Help us to be a church where all are welcome and where God's glory is discerned and cherished by many different faces.

People: **Lord in your Light and Love, hear our prayer.**

Reader: God of Creation, we thank you for the beauty of our skies, for the richness of creation and for the moments when we feel close to one another and to you., Teach us how to walk in a different way in your world; to walk gently, cherishing all that you have made and seeing your glory all around us.

People: **Lord, in your Light and Love, hear our prayer.**

Reader: God of mystery, in a time of pandemic, it's hard to work out where you are and why you allow such hardship and suffering. Give us the strength to keep going even when we feel forsaken. We pray for all who are suffering today, beginning within our hearts as we name within ourselves or before our sisters and brothers those for whom we pray (LEAVE A MOMENT OF SILENCE PLEASE )

and for those of our parish family who we hold before you - Marjorie, Roy, Howard and Irene, Jeanette, Cheryl, Zachariah, and their families. We pray for all the caregivers and front line workers who seek to bring respite, healing, care and hope. People: God of Light and Love, hear our prayer.

Reader: God of Life, help us to see you even in the face of death. Help us to trust in you even when the road travelled takes loved ones away. We hold in our deep thoughts and prayers Carole Acres and her family as she grieves the death of her brother this past week. Rest eternal grant to Ken McDonald and may your Light eternal shine upon him. Alleluia and Amen



We place into your care our loved ones who have died; as we travel towards you in this world and the next, draw us closer to yourself, forgive our sins and mend that which is broken within and within our relationships with others until we come to kneel before you in wonder, awe and joy. Amen

(The Reverend Anne Morris from revannemorris.co.uk)

Celebrant: Lord, we seek you in the darkness and look for stars to follow down the road of life so we may find our Bethlehem.

People: **Forgive us Lord when we are struggling with life, searching for answers in vain, relying on our own strength and failing again and again. Remind us, Lord, that you are our strength upon whom we can call, the power to endure and the answer that we seek. You are the One into whose arms we can fall. Forgive us, Lord, when we forget this or you. Amen**

Celebrant; May we walk in the Light of Christ, the Love of God and the Dance of the Spirit today and all our days,; in Jesus' name we pray. Amen

Celebrant: We have heard of your grace, Shaper of Stars, from those set free from injustice; from our children who whisper of your joy; from greeters of dawn's fresh start; from late risers who listen to the stories of the needy. We have heard of your Light, Bright Star of the Morning, which can illuminate the shadows of our lives; which can show the pathway to God's heart; which can point the way to where we become servants of the gospel.

We have heard of your promised peace, Wisdom's Radiance, that peace which can end war as well as heal our hearts; that peace which can conquer our fears and flood us with faith; that peace which can enter our lives and overwhelm us with hope. We have heard of you, God in Community, Holy in One, and we will proclaim your glory to all even as we pray saying,

**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.**

Celebrant: Christmas comes every time we see God in other persons. The human and the holy meet in Bethlehem and in Times Square, for Christmas comes like a golden storm on its way to Jerusalem – determinately, inevitably... Even now it comes in the face of hatred and warring – no atrocity too terrible to stop it, no Herod strong enough, no hurt deep enough, no curse shocking enough, so disaster shattering enough.

For someone on earth will see the star, someone will hear the angel voices, someone will run to Bethlehem, someone will know peace and goodwill; the Christ will be born again and again. Alleluia



(Ann Weems, Christmas Comes from Kneeling in Bethlehem adapted by RMF)

**People: Your love flows like a stream into the ocean of your Grace. Your love encircles this world, displays your faithfulness is patient and kind and brings wholeness and true peace. Your love is all we desire to heal our brokenness. As all things pass and fade away, love remains eternally. Reveal yourself, Gracious God, within this time of worship. Speak to us by the songs we sing, prayers we speak, and words we hear.**

**Reveal yourself Gracious God, within your family here, in our tears and laughter, in our love that's shared. Reveal yourself, Gracious God, within these coming days, in the places where we live, in the lives we live and in the people we meet. Be with you, Gracious God, as we leave this time of worship and awayness to reenter your world where we follow your Star and your Son Jesus. Amen.**

Celebrant: go now into all the world; be His light in the darkness. His Hope in the emptiness, His Love in the loneliness, His Joy in the sadness. Go now with the breathe of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit in your lives and the Word of God upon your lips. Be the church until we gather again. Amen and Amen

Announcements, and Celebrations

Parish Council Meeting - January 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 over Zoom

Vestry Reports needed. Please send to Karen at [etalgoy@gmail.com](mailto:etalgoy@gmail.com) by January 23.

Holy Trinity Vestry Meeting - February 20.

**Worship follows the Holy Eucharist in the Book of Alternative Services.**

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