



A MOMENT WITH GOD
January 2025

Join in and join up
EPIPHANY

Christ is the King! O friends rejoice
sung by St Martin's Voices

George K A Bell (1883-1958)
© Oxford University Press

Christ is the King! O friends rejoice;
brothers and sisters, with one voice
tell all the world he is your choice.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

O magnify the Lord, and raise
anthems of joy and holy praise
for Christ's brave saints of ancient days.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

O Christian women, Christian men,
all the world over, seek again
the way disciples followed then.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Let love's unconquerable might
your scattered companies unite
in service to the Lord of light.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

So shall God's will on earth be done,
new lamps be lit, new tasks begun,
and the whole Church at last be one.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Opening prayer

John Birch

You speak to us in many ways,
through rushing wind
or still small voice,
in Scripture's Word
or through your Grace
and we in turn find many ways,
to hear the world's
insistent voice
break through the silence
and take your place.
Forgive our sin.
Help us hear your voice
above the clamour of this world,
recognise the difference
and follow only you. Amen

Bible reading: Matthew 2:1-11

from The Message

Scholars from the East

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem village, Judah territory—this was during Herod's kingship—a band of scholars arrived in Jerusalem from the East. They asked around, "Where can we find and pay homage to the newborn King of the Jews? We observed a star in the eastern sky that signalled his birth. We're on pilgrimage to worship him."

When word of their inquiry got to Herod, he was terrified—and not Herod alone, but most of Jerusalem as well. Herod lost no time. He gathered all the high priests and religion scholars in the city together and asked, “Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?” They told him, “Bethlehem, Judah territory. The prophet Micah wrote it plainly:

It’s you, Bethlehem, in Judah’s land,
no longer bringing up the rear.

From you will come the leader
who will shepherd-rule my people, my Israel.”

Herod then arranged a secret meeting with the scholars from the East. Pretending to be as devout as they were, he got them to tell him exactly when the birth-announcement star appeared. Then he told them the prophecy about Bethlehem, and said, “Go find this child. Leave no stone unturned. As soon as you find him, send word and I’ll join you at once in your worship.”

Instructed by the king, they set off. Then the star appeared again, the same star they had seen in the eastern skies. It led them on until it hovered over the place of the child. They could hardly contain themselves: They were in the right place! They had arrived at the right time!

They entered the house and saw the child in the arms of Mary, his mother. Overcome, they kneeled and worshipped him. Then they opened their luggage and presented gifts: gold, frankincense, myrrh.

Reflection:

Jonny Baker

what do you read for signs of god's presence?

does your interest go down as well as up?

can you spot a good investment?

have you outsourced your spirituality?

do you call in consultants to tell you

where the christ might be found?
do you really want to know?

how far would you go to see god?
would you come down to the ground floor lobby?
as far as the tube station?
as far as brighton?
would you stand all the way?

would you switch off your phone in the stable?

how much would you spend on presents?

would you give christ a golden hello?

10% of pre-tax earnings?

a tip for the markets?

a few more stables and a derby winner?

would you buy shares in his suffering or sell him cheap when the
market falls?

how far would you go to oppose god?

who would you kill? and how many?

is your intelligence good?

do you know which safe house the christ-child is in?

do you ask how many others are in the building?

in whose game are you a pawn?

do you play for herod or leave by another route?

do you expect a good return?

Hymn: As with gladness men of old

sung by St Martin's Voices

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 Lord, may we
evermore be led to thee.

As with joyful steps they sped,
to that lowly manger-bed,
there to bend the knee before
him whom heaven and earth adore;
so may we with willing feet
ever seek thy mercy-seat.

As they offered gifts most rare
at that manger 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.

Holy Jesu, every day
keep us in the narrow way,
and, when earthly things are past,
bring our ransomed souls at last
where they need no star to guide,
where no clouds thy glory hide.

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 for ever may we sing
alleluias to our King.

William Chatterton Dix (1837-1898)

Prayers:

When faith is tested to the limit
and we stumble
forgive us.

When feet stray from the path
and we wander
forgive us.

When our neighbour is in need
and we pass by
forgive us.

When the voices of this world
drown out your whisper
forgive us.

When love draws us to your feet
in repentance
forgive us.

Mary Sumner's personal prayer

All this day, O Lord,
let me touch as many lives as possible for thee;
and every life I touch, do thou by thy spirit quicken,
whether through the word I speak,
the prayer I breathe,
or the life I live.

Amen

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Hymn: Love came down at Christmas

Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, Love divine;
Love was born at Christmas,
Star and angels gave the sign.

Worship we the Godhead,
Love Incarnate, Love divine;
Worship we our Jesus:
But wherewith for sacred sign?

Love shall be our token,
Love be yours and love be mine,
Love to God and all men,
Love for plea and gift and sign.

Christina Rossetti (1830–94)

set by Reginald O. Morris.

Sung by the Choir of King's College, Cambridge, 2012

A final thought

Godfrey Rust

Will you study these signs
as carefully
as you study the prices
in the Christmas catalogues?

Will you seek out the manger
as diligently
as you search for the right scarf
or this year's toy?

Will you examine
your heart's pilgrimage
and be sure towards what stable
it carries its precious gifts?

Will you be a wise fool
to find and follow
the strange star of truth
in a sky full of glittering lies?

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TOGETHER