**Worship sheet for Sunday 3rd January 2021 - Epiphany - Compiled by Sue Kinder from St Ives Methodist Church**

At the start of this new year, we join with all who love God, wherever they may be, and bring our worship. Let us search for the One Who holds the past, present and future in His hands. Let us seek His guidance. Let us commit ourselves to a renewed relationship with Him.

Logo, company name

Description automatically generated

This season is termed ‘Epiphany’ and is commemorated as the introduction of Christ to the Gentiles - as represented by the Magi. We often use the word ‘epiphany’ to mean a moment of sudden and great revelation or realisation. The origins of this word come from “revealing”, however not much gets revealed in the dark, but wherever there is **Light**, we can use the opportunity to strengthen our relationship with God.

**Song:** StF 254 [SEEK YE FIRST (The Kingdom Of God) | The Maranatha / Karen Lafferty | Worship Song | With Lyrics - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=k3S1wfXmYPw)

**Opening Prayers**

Creator God, by whose Spirit we exist that we might bear fruit for You; help us to measure our lives, not in achievements or possessions but by how much we love, and give, and feel Your commendation of “well done good and faithful servant”.

Holy Saviour, we lift our eyes to You. We seek Your guiding light and offer up our gifts of worship and praise to our King. Blessed Son of Man, full of grace Who brings light into our world, we bow down in humble adoration.

Heavenly Father, Bring to our mind the times we need to confess and ask for Your mercy and forgiveness. When we have not celebrated Your goodness and love, forgive us. For the times when we have not lived in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, forgive us. When we have not stood firm to Your kingdom values, forgive us. For the times when we have not united in the Spirit, forgive us. We are sorry that we do not always hear, do not always listen, and do not always obey. When we *have* heard Your call but turned away, dear Lord: forgive us. Forgive us for our own ideas of where to find You and our thoughts that You will work inside our comfort zones. Deepen our understanding of where to search and discern Your presence. Increase our reverence and awe as we realise that the Light of the World would choose birth in a manger and death on a cross to witness His love for us. And we ask for discernment, courage and strength to be faithful to You. Amen

**Lord’s Prayer** [Matthew 6 TPT - Giving with Pure Motives - “Examine - Bible Gateway](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+6&version=TPT)

**Scripture Readings:** Isaiah 60v1-6 Ps 72 (v1-9) v10-14 Matt 2v1-12

Corona virus has cast a dark shadow over our nation and our world. It has brought poverty, isolation and death. The world is looking to the politicians for guidance and a vaccine for rescue, but we see disharmony and hear that a variant strain is spreading faster than ever. Two thousand and twenty years ago in a land of darkness, a light shone and the Saviour was born. Although announced to Mary and Joseph, we later read that Jesus’ family were not that convinced. Shepherds on the fringe of society welcomed Him, but the religious upright did not. Although prophesied and awaited, the hustle and bustle of the ordinary citizens complying with their Roman oppressors’ demand for a census, pushed the newborn to the company of animals and a bed of straw. In their hopelessness, the people didn’t recognise their Messiah. Then magi – mystical stargazers, foreigners, strangers to Israel - comprehended a sign, and set their faces to act on what they had understood. Guided by the light of a star, they travelled to acknowledge a king with gold, a priest with frankincense, and a sacrifice with myrrh.

And then they got sensible.. . . . . . Are you sensible? Be careful how you answer that! Surely a king is to be found in a palace? Surely the leader of the country would have his finger on the pulse of important events like the whereabouts of the monarch-in-waiting? But they were wrong. Frantic revision of the scriptures by the teachers of the law, unearthed Bethlehem; and the magi were instructed to ‘go and search’. Which they did, and were rewarded with finding a treasure greater than the treasures they had brought, and they were overjoyed! However, the chief priest and religious leaders stayed where they were, nothing changed for them. The political leader instigated a slaughter but not before protection for God’s plan-of-salvation was implemented.. . . . . And the magi went home another way. They’d learned their lesson. True kingship is found in humility, true priesthood is in obedience and true life is in abandonment of self. The magi had another chance, an epiphany, and they went a different way.

**Poem:** ["Journey of the Magi" T. S. Eliot (British accent) - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KBg_aYvp5GU)

**Prayers for others and ourselves**:

Because we read in Scripture “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." . . . . .

We pray for our country’s leaders. You are a God of wisdom, help our leaders to be wise, strengthen them to rule with integrity and compassion for the benefit of all.

We pray for our church’s oversight. May they diligently study Your word and act on Your revelation.

We pray for those who plan to do harm, that You would stay their hands.

We pray for those searching for answers that your guiding light would bring them to the solution.

We pray for those who feel vulnerable that they would trust in the Lord at all times, for You O Lord are our refuge and our fortress, and we will not be shaken.

We pray for those who have strayed, taken the wrong paths and done their own thing, that they would turn around and go a different way.

We pray for those who are too busy to notice You, that they would reassess their lives and discover where real fulfilment lies.

We pray for the sick and ask for Your hand of healing upon them. We pray for the grieving and ask that You comfort them.

We pray for those who feel hopeless that they would find rest in the king of the universe; for You alone are our hope, our rock and our salvation.

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

**Song:** StF 345 [And Can it be That I should Gain - Wesley - HD - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HrIgWfkh7f4)

**Blessing to Bless Others**

Eternal God, who sent Your Son to be born among us that we might be born again to newness of life; send us on our journey, guided by Your light; that in humility, obedience and sacrifice we might reveal the treasures of Your kingdom to those around us. Amen.

**Song:** SoF 536 [The Lord Is Marching Out In Splendour(O Give Thanks) - Graham Kendrick (With lyrics) - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hHwlffrmqKs)