



Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

Mysterious wise men travelled from the east seeking the child born to be king of the Jews. **May we like them go on a journey of discovery.**

The wise men persisted through setbacks and wrong turns until they found the Christ child. May we seek until we find.

They worshipped him and offered him their most precious gifts. **May we, too, worship the Christ child and offer him our hearts and our all.**

Light the candle - Christ is with us.

Acknowledging

As we gather, we acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of these unceded lands and waters. We pay respect to Elders past and present. As First and Second Peoples walking together, we commit ourselves to be people of the covenant, listening, truth telling and seeking justice for all.



Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress

Singing: Angels from the realms of glory TIS 309

OR: When God almighty came to be one of us TIS 281. OR: The first Nowell TIS 301. OR: The virgin Mary had a baby boy TIS 307. OR: O come all ye faithful TIS 304



Prayer

The prophet Isaiah proclaims great promises of God's glory and of God's light that overcomes the darkness.

May we, too, trust in the one we call the Light of the world.

Isaiah tells of those who come seeking that Light. **May we, too, seek your light and your guidance, confident that you guide all who seek.**

Isaiah tells of the thrill of seeing with eyes open to the glory of God. **May we, too, have eyes and hearts open to God's new revelation. May we rejoice and praise God as we come to worship. Amen.**

As we gather on the first Sunday of 2025, let us pause to remember the year that has just finished.

Let us think about the good times*pause*
The bad times and the hard times*pause*
The successes and the failures*pause*
Those times we glad to remember*pause*
And those we would rather forget*pause*
And let us offer them to God.

Loving God, you are the Creator, the One who invented time, this world, and this universe, and who has given us the gift of life with which to enjoy it. When we have failed to value your gift of life and time, and taken all we have for granted, **forgive us.**

Loving God, you love us and you call us to love you, our neighbour and ourselves. When we have failed to love you, our neighbour and ourselves, **forgive us.**

When we are consumed by regrets, brokenness, and failure, and struggle to believe that you forgive, heal, and renew, **forgive us, heal us, and renew us.**

When we struggle to have hope, when we feel burdened and overwhelmed, **help us to seek your guidance, your strength, and your healing.**

Prayer continues

Weekly Worship. Season of Epiphany 2025. A Worship Resource from Friends of the Fig Tree.



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA



Prayer continues

Loving God, help us to leave behind all that holds us back, and help us to see the potential and the opportunities that this new year brings.

Let us move forward in hope and in the Light of Christ, with hearts and eyes open, believing in your forgiveness, your goodness, and your never-ending love. Thanks be to God.

Passing the peace

May the Peace of God dwell with you:
and also with you.

Listening

Read: Isaiah 60:1-6 &
Matthew 2:1-12

For these words of faith and for Jesus the Word:
Thanks be to God.

Singing: We three kings of Orient are

OR: The north wind is tossing the leaves TiS 322
Words by John Hopkins (public domain)
Found in Together at Christmas 91

We three kings of Orient are,
bearing gifts we traverse afar
field and fountain, moor and mountain,
following yonder star.

*Chorus: O star of wonder, star of night,
star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to your perfect light.*

Born a king on Bethlehem's plain,
gold I bring to crown him again,
king for ever, ceasing never,
over us all to reign:

Chorus

Frankincense to offer have I,
incense owns a deity nigh,

prayer and praising, all men raising,
worship him, God Most High:

Chorus

Myrrh is mine, its bitter perfume
breathes a life of gathering gloom:
sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,
sealed in the stone-cold tomb:

Chorus

Glorious now behold him arise,
King and God and Sacrifice;
Alleluia, alleluia!
earth to heaven replies:

Chorus

Reflecting Rev. Moira Dodsworth

In our tradition, Epiphany (e-PIF-e-nee) is a festival celebrating Christ's appearance to the Gentiles, observed every year on January 6.

[vocabulary.com/dictionary/epiphany](https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/epiphany)

I find it fascinating when I go looking for something and find something I don't expect. We are told that we are celebrating Christ's appearance to the gentiles. So how is this connected to the Magi, and how does it connect to the three crowned figures in royal robes who turn up in scenes of the nativity. I wonder how often in our "Christian tradition" we are telling our own story, rather than exploring what God might be saying to us.

Matthew's gospel begins with a history lesson, kings and priests of history, placing the birth of Jesus firmly in reality - a good place to start. We who follow in faith know the birth of Christ is real, but Matthew provides evidence. He also relates Jesus back to people who were the first in the long line of God's people, before there were priests and prophets who were part of a religion.

We read today from Isaiah, a prophet telling the people of one who is to come, but far into the

Reflecting continues

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Reflecting continues

future – a servant who is “light to the nations” and he mentions the gifts that will be brought to glorify God’s house, the gifts that the Magi bring. All this is making our story, our tradition, the legacy that we must remember and pass on. Isaiah kept going because of God’s assurance that this would happen – he knew what he had to say: that God included all people in God’s revelation.

To go back to our definition, we are celebrating Christ’s appearance to all people, Christ’s appearance, then, and now, and in the future. This to me was an epiphany, a light bulb moment. We do not have to worry about all those people who have not been told about Christ, on the fifth of January we celebrate that Christ has appeared to them. In God’s time, Christ has, is and will appear.

So, as Isaiah kept telling the people what God told him to, we must keep doing what God has called us to do. Isaiah kept telling the people, regardless of whether they listened, they were confused, they didn’t believe but they hoped. Non-reception doesn’t make the message any less divine. The message for us is that the fulfilment of God’s promise as told in Luke, is our hope, is the basis of our faith and our relationship with God now.

Anyone can know the Messiah, God fulfils the hope of all who seek what God is, all who seek meaning in life beyond what society appears to offer, what is beyond the fulfilment of our own selfish desires. God is just, merciful and loving and wishes those things for us.

God works in various ways bringing all people to the knowledge of and faith in God. The magi were gentiles, people who read the stars and God directed them to the place where the infant Christ was born. God directed them through the hierarchy of rulers and Jewish leaders to the Christ because they sought God. They bring the gifts of the prophecy to remind us that God is, was and will be forever our hope.

Let us do whatever God has called us each to do in God’s kingdom now, to say the words that may be understood in the future, like Isaiah, to do what Jesus

did in signs of love and care, demonstrating Christ’s presence now and living in the hope of God’s eternal kingdom.

Singing: Brother, sister TiS 650

OR: Lord of creation TiS 626

OR: Jesus’ hands were kind hands TiS 236



Offering

The wise men brought the best of what they had to honor the one born to be king.

We might not have any gold or frankincense or myrrh, but we, too, might bring the best of what we have, to honour the One whose love for us is more precious than any gold.

So, let us offer our lives in service as well as our gifts of money. Amen.

Notices

For the start of the year, we have included a covenant prayer on page five.





Responding: Prayers for World & Community

As we come before you God in prayer, at the beginning of this new year we are very aware of the many wars and conflicts that despoil your world and destroy the lives of so many people.

So we pray for all who are caught up in wars and conflicts and those who are trying to help them. We pray that 2025 might be a year when you will raise up peacemakers.

We pray for the leaders of nations, that you might speak to their hearts and minds reminding them of your call to peace, justice, and mercy. God of signs and wonders, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for this coming year and what it might mean for us as a nation.

We pray for our Prime Minister, Premier, politicians and councillors, and all leaders including CEO's and people of influence, asking that they may fulfil their responsibilities with fairness, seeking to heal the divisions within our society, and promoting fairness, justice, generosity, kindness and concern for others. God of signs and wonders, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for your Church across the world. May it be a beacon of light into the darkness of the world. We remember Christians facing discrimination and oppression, and pray they may not be forgotten and that others may reach out for help. We pray for ministers, lay leaders and all who proclaim the Gospel in word or deed that they may remain faithful to their calling. God of signs and wonders, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for those who have struggled over Christmas. We pray for the lonely and isolated, for those with broken or faltering relationships, those who are struggling with addictions, those trapped in debt, those in jail, and for those who are desperate for change. We also pray for foster children and their carers, and for all who work in welfare, child protection, family violence, alcohol and

drug rehabilitation, and prisons. May they all know your love, strength and guidance. God of signs and wonders, **hear our prayer.**

We remember before you those who are in our hearts ...

We pray for those who are ill or in trouble or in any sort of need ...

We remember those who have died, and for those who mourn them.

We pray for ourselves, that we will seek your guidance through the coming year, and that when you give us dreams that we will have the courage to follow them.

God of signs and wonders, **hear our prayer.**

The Lord's Prayer

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 forever. Amen





Covenant prayer

**I am no longer my own, but yours.
Put me to what you will,
place me with whom you will.
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.
Let me be put to work for you
or set aside for you,
Praised for you or criticised for you.
Let me be full, let me be empty.
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.
I freely and fully surrender all things
to your glory and service.
And now, O wonderful and holy God,
Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer,
you are mine, and I am yours.
So be it.
And the covenant which I have made on earth,
Let it also be made in heaven.
Amen.**

Prayer by John Wesley

Singing: As with gladness TIS 314

OR: Not the powerful, not the privileged TIS 288

OR: Loving Spirit TIS 417

Blessing

If we travel east or west: **God is there.**
If we travel north or south: **God is there.**
If we travel down into the deepest depths of the ocean: **God is there.**
If we travel through desert or forest or jungle or the crowded city streets: **God is there**
Wherever we go, whenever we go: **God is there.**

Therefore, trust that God will be there for us in 2025, loving us, upholding us, and guiding us into the future. So go now in the light and glory of God seeking to shine that light wherever you go. **Amen.**

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