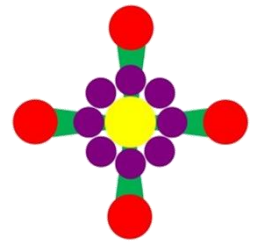


**The Benefice of  
Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme  
4<sup>th</sup> January 2026**



The Feast of The Epiphany

Today's Liturgy prepared by Alison

**The Greeting**

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; they who lived in a land of deep darkness, on them the light has shined.

Jesus, Word made flesh dwelling among us,

**come, lighten our darkness.**

Jesus born of the blessed Virgin Mary,

**come, lighten our darkness.**

Jesus, adored by the wise men,

**come, lighten our darkness.**

Jesus, revealed in the world,

**come, lighten our darkness.**

Jesus Christ is the Light of the World,

**A light that no darkness can extinguish.**

Gladly, O God, we come together, with all those using this written service, to seek your deeper presence in the silence...

We bring before you our wounds and our weariness from the journey.

Together we look with hopeful expectation to find the star which signals your arrival

Thankfully we come forward to kneel and to receive the glory of your presence, with our little gifts we are humbled before you.

And we find among the straw, in the misty breath of the animals,

That you have come more humanly than we could imagine.

## Prayers of Penitence

The grace of God has dawned upon the world  
through our Saviour Jesus Christ,  
who sacrificed himself for us to purify a people as his own.  
Let us confess our sins.

## Confession

Lord Jesus, you are mighty God  
and Prince of peace:  
Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you are Son of God  
and Son of Mary:  
Christ, have mercy.

**Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you are Word made flesh  
and splendour of the Father:  
Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

## Assurance of Forgiveness

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon us,  
pardon and deliver us from all our sins, confirm and strengthen us in all  
goodness, and keep us in life eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## Collect

Creator of the heavens,  
who led the Magi by a star to worship the Christ-child:  
guide and sustain us,  
that we may find our journey's end  
in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

### The First Reading: **Isaiah 60: 1-6**

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms.

Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.

Thanks be to God for the gift of His word

### The Second Reading: **Matthew 2: 1-12**

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising and have come to pay him homage.' When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

"And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people, Israel."

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.' When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy.

On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road. Thanks be to God for the gift of His Word.

### Reflection from Alison

A very **happy New Year** to you all. As we step into 2026, we do so in the season of Epiphany, a season about *revelation*, about God being made known not in grand gestures, but through quiet signs that draw us gently towards hope.

A star in the sky. A child in a manger. Ordinary things that become holy because God chooses to meet us there.

Over these past weeks, something beautiful has been revealed across our benefice of **Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth and Denholme**. Our Christingle and Carol services were wonderfully well attended, our churches filled with light, music, generosity and warmth. It was a reminder that people are still drawn by the light, even when faith feels tentative, or life feels complicated.

At **St John's**, some people placed robins on the Christmas tree in memory of loved ones. Small, tender acts of remembrance that spoke of love that continues beyond loss, and of hope held gently alongside grief. And scattered throughout our villages were the baby Jesus stones, simple, unexpected signs left in everyday places, quietly proclaiming that God is with us, in our streets and homes, even when the way ahead feels uncertain.

The wise men did not have a map, only a star. They trusted the light enough to follow it. And so we find ourselves at the beginning of a new year, standing on the threshold of a new chapter. We give thanks for all that has been, and we hold before God our hope that this year will bring the arrival of a new Team Rector, someone called and gifted to walk with us, to guide us, and to help us discern where the light is leading next. As we look ahead, we pray that **2026 will be a year of blessing** across our benefice, a year of kindness, healing and renewed hope. And we especially pray for those who begin this year carrying heavy burdens: those facing illness, loss, anxiety or uncertainty. May no one feel alone. May all know themselves supported, held in prayer, and surrounded by the quiet faithfulness of this community.

Epiphany reminds us of this enduring truth: God has already gone ahead of us. The light still shines. And as we keep our eyes open, and our hearts willing, we will recognise Christ among us, and be changed by what we find.

Amen

### **Affirmation of Faith**

We believe in God the Father,  
from whom every family  
in heaven and on earth is named.  
We believe in God the Son,  
who lives in our hearts through faith,  
and fills us with his love.  
We believe in God the Holy Spirit,  
who strengthens us  
with power from on high.  
We believe in one God;  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

### **Prayers of Intercession led by Alison**

Let us pray to the God who makes himself known,  
the light who shines in the darkness,  
and the love revealed in Jesus Christ.

Response (optional):

Lord of light,  
hear our prayer.

For the Church

Lord God,

as the star led the wise ones to Christ,  
lead your Church in every place to reflect your light faithfully.

We pray for our benefice of Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth and Denholme:  
for clergy, lay leaders, volunteers and congregations,  
that together we may be signs of welcome, hope and truth in our communities.  
Give us courage to shine with your love,  
especially where faith feels fragile or hope feels dim.

Lord of light,  
hear our prayer.  
For the world  
God of all nations,  
the Magi came from far away, drawn by a promise they did not fully  
understand.  
We pray for a world still longing for direction and peace.  
For places of conflict, injustice and fear;  
for leaders and decision-makers,  
that they may seek wisdom, justice and compassion above self-interest.  
May your light break through wherever there is violence, displacement or  
despair.

Lord of light,  
hear our prayer.  
For our local communities  
Lord, you are present in the ordinary places of life.  
We pray for our villages and towns:  
for schools and shops, farms and businesses,  
for those who serve the public, and those who feel unseen or unheard.  
Bless all who work for the good of others,  
and help us to notice Christ already at work among us.

Lord of light,  
hear our prayer.  
For those in need  
Compassionate God,  
you revealed yourself not in power, but in vulnerability.  
We pray for all who are struggling at this time:  
those who are ill or awaiting diagnosis,  
those burdened by grief, loneliness, anxiety or financial worry.  
Bring comfort to the weary, healing to the sick,  
and hope to all who feel lost or overwhelmed.

Lord of light,  
hear our prayer.  
For ourselves  
Lord Jesus,  
the wise ones offered gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.  
Help us to offer you not just words, but our lives:  
our time, our compassion, our willingness to follow where you lead.  
When the road ahead is unclear,  
help us to trust your light one step at a time.

Lord of light,  
hear our prayer.  
We remember before God those who have died,  
and all whom we love but see no longer.  
May they rest in the light of your eternal presence.

**Merciful Father,  
accept these prayers for the sake of your Son,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

## **The Lord's Prayer**

**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.**

## Closing Prayers

Blessed are you, O Lord God, who by the leading of a star brought the wise men to come before Jesus. Through him, who is our Saviour, you reveal your love and light to the whole world. In our seeking, guide us that we may come before you, that we may come to know you, to love you and to worship you this day and always. Blessed are you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

## Blessing

Lord God, to live without you is to walk in the darkness:  
to live in awareness of you is to live in the light.  
Help us to know and to reveal your love  
and your light through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

May God the Father,  
who led the wise men by the shining of a star  
to find the Christ, the Light from light,  
lead us also in our pilgrimage to find the Lord. **Amen.**

May God, who has delivered us from the dominion of darkness,  
give us a place with the saints in light  
in the kingdom of his beloved Son. **Amen.**

May the light of the glorious gospel of Christ  
shine in our hearts and fill our lives with his joy and peace. **Amen.**

## Sending Out

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord:  
**in the name of Christ. Amen.**