

The Eucharist for Epiphany



*The sun that never sets has risen;
the blinding mist of the world is dispersed by the Epiphany of our God.
(Common Worship, Prayers for Epiphany)*

**St Paul's Clifton
and Cotham Parish Church**

In the Western churches, the Epiphany ('manifestation') became an occasion to celebrate one element in the story of Christ's birth, the visit of the far-travelled magi, understood as the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles. Matthew's account speaks simply of 'wise men from the east'; later tradition fixed their number at three, made them kings and recalled their resonant names – Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar. In this perspective, Epiphanytide is an apt season to pray for the worldwide mission of the Church. The feast of the Conversion of St Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, appropriately falls in the Epiphany season, as does the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. In the Eastern churches, the Epiphany is, rather, the celebration of Christ's baptism at the hands of John, when the heavens were opened and a voice from heaven declared Jesus to be God's beloved Son. The miracle of Cana in Galilee, where Jesus 'first manifested his glory', follows immediately

The season of joyful celebration that begins at Christmas now continues through the successive Sundays of Epiphany, and the festal cycle ends only with the Feast of the Presentation (Candlemas). The child who has been manifested to the magi at his birth is now recognized by Simeon and Anna, when he comes to be presented in the Temple according to the Law of Israel. He is both 'a light to lighten the Gentiles' and 'the glory of God's people Israel'. But the redemption he will bring must be won through suffering; the Incarnation is directed to the Passion; and Simeon's final words move our attention away from the celebration of Christmas and towards the mysteries of Easter.

From Common Worship, Times and Seasons

Attending

Step aside: let the day breath,

Look within: let your heart be still.

Listen well: hear the still, small voice,

calling you back to what God has made you to be.

In the middle of all that life offers us

in the eye of all the storms, we thank you for the gift of this moment,

for the grace of this presence.

From The Earth Cries Glory, Steven Shakespeare

*We say or sing the words in **bold type***

The Gathering

A church warden welcomes all who have gathered and invites us to some moments of shared quiet preparation. This is followed by a piece of reflective music ('the Introit')

We stand

Opening Hymn: 240 - Good Christians all, rejoice

The Greeting

In the name of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Words of introduction and invitation

Prayers of Penitence

The grace of God has dawned upon the world
through our Saviour Jesus Christ,
Let us come to the light of Christ,
as we confess our sins

Lord Jesus, illuminate the darkness in our hearts:

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, open our eyes to your saving love:

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, unstop our ears to hear your living word:

Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy**

Absolution

A minister proclaims the good news of God's mercy and forgiveness

May the God of love and power
forgive you and free you from your sins,
heal and strengthen you by his Spirit,
and raise you to new life in Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Gloria

We sing these or other words led by a cantor

**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.**

The Collect

Almighty and ever-living God,
clothed in majesty,
whose beloved Son was this day presented in the Temple,
in substance of our flesh:
grant that we may be presented to you
with pure and clean hearts,
by your Son Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen

The Liturgy of the Word

We sit

Old Testament Reading: Malachi 3.1-5

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years. Then I will draw near to you for judgement; I will be swift to bear witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired workers in their wages, the widow, and the orphan, against those who thrust aside the alien, and do not fear me, says the Lord of hosts.

For the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

New Testament Reading: Hebrews 2.14-18

Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

For the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

We stand as we sing:

The Gradual Hymn: 157 - Faithful vigil ended

The Gospel Reading: Luke 2.22-40

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

Glory to you, O Lord.

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, 'Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord'), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, 'a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.'

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

‘Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.’

And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, ‘This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.’

There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband for seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him.

This is the Gospel of the Lord
Praise be to you, O Christ.

We sit

Reflection

One of the ministers shares thoughts and reflections on the readings and themes of the day; an encouragement to connect faith with our lives

We stand

Profession of Faith

Let us affirm our common faith in Jesus Christ.

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
source of all being and life,
the one for whom we exist?

I believe and trust in God.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,
who took our human nature,
died for us and rose again?

I believe and trust in Jesus Christ.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God
and makes Christ known in the world?

I believe and trust in the Holy Spirit.

This is the faith of the Church.

This is our faith.

**We believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

We sit

The Intercessions

The prayers may end:

Merciful Father

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

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

We stand

The Peace

Christ is our peace.
If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation.
The old has passed away: behold, everything has become new.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.
and also with you.

We offer a gesture of peace to those around us

Offertory Hymn: 171 - Fill me thou, O God (omit v 5,6)

Preparation of the table

As we come to the Table, bread and wine are taken and blest, and the bread is broken as we share the meal that re-members Jesus, the food that 'tastes of freedom'.

Gracious God,
accept the offering of your Church,
the hearts of your people
joined in praise and thanksgiving,
in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.
Amen.

The Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord is here

God's Spirit is with us

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is indeed right and good,
always and everywhere to give you thanks and praise
through Jesus Christ, who is one with you from all eternity.

For on this day he appeared in the Temple
in substance of our flesh

to come near to us in judgement.

He searches the hearts of all your people
and brings to light the image of your splendour.

Your servant Simeon acclaimed him as the light to lighten the nations
while Anna spoke of him to all who looked for your redemption.

Destined for the falling and rising of many,
he was lifted high upon the cross

and a sword of sorrow pierced his mother's heart
when by his sacrifice he made our peace with you.

And now we rejoice and glorify your name

that we, too, have seen your salvation

and join with angels and archangels

in their unending hymn of praise:

We sing:

Holy, holy, holy Lord,

God of power and might,

heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

We praise and bless you, loving Father,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and as we follow his example and obey his command,
send your Holy Spirit,
that broken bread and wine outpoured
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he praised you.
He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:
Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice
made once for all upon the cross.
Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
we proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith
Christ has died
Christ is risen
Christ will come again.

Lord of all life, help us to work together for that day
when your kingdom comes
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,
gather us in your loving arms
and bring us with [N and] all the saints
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,
for ever and ever.

Amen.

We sit

The Lord's Prayer

Believing the promises of God,
as our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**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.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.**

Breaking Bread

We break the bread of life,
and that life is the light of the world.

**God here among us,
light in the midst of us,
bring us to light and life.**

Agnus Dei

We sing:

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.**

Invitation

Here is the table of the Lord,
**we are gathered to his supper,
a foretaste of things eternal.**

Come, when you are fearful, to be made new in love.
Come, when you are doubtful, to be made strong in faith.
Come, when you are regretful, and be made whole.
Come, there is room for all.

Communion

*We keep an **Open Table** - **all** are invited and **all** are welcome to receive the bread that has been taken, blest and broken. If you would prefer to receive a blessing then please bring this service sheet with you to indicate this.*

Communion chant: 932 - Kindle a flame

Prayer after Communion

Lord, you fulfilled the hope of Simeon and Anna,
who lived to welcome the Messiah:
may we, who have received these gifts beyond words,
prepare to meet Christ Jesus when he comes
to bring us to eternal life;
for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever. **Amen**

Banns of Marriage, news and notices may be shared

We stand

Candlemas Procession

Candles are lit

Blessed are you, Lord our God,
King of the Universe

Blessed be God forever

Your light shines on us
and all peoples shall see your glory

Blessed be God forever

You gave us Jesus to be the light of the world;
He makes our darkness to be light.

Blessed be God forever

Through the Holy Spirit your love burns within us,
bearing witness to your truth.

Blessed be God forever

As we bear your light,
may our lips never cease to sing your praise.

Blessed be God forever

Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Blessed be God forever

Final Responsory

Father, we have sung your praise with shepherds and angels:
may Christ be born in our hearts today.

Praise to Christ our light.

We have shared in the joy of Simeon and Anna;
help us, like them, to trust your word.

Praise to Christ our light.

We have greeted Jesus, the light of the world;
may we be filled with the light of your love.

Praise to Christ our light.

The Conclusion

We stand near the place of new birth.

Let us shine with the light of your love.

We turn from crib to the cross.

Let us shine with the light of your love.

We go to carry his light.

Let us shine with the light of your love.

Thanks be to God.

Final Hymn: Christ be our light

1. Longing for light, we wait in darkness.

Longing for truth, we turn to you.

Make us your own, your holy people,
light for the world to see.

Christ, be our light!

Shine in our hearts.

Shine through the darkness.

Christ, be our light!

Shine in your church gathered today.

2. Longing for peace, our world is troubled.

Longing for hope, many despair.

Your word alone has power to save us.

Make us your living voice.

Christ, be our light!

3. Longing for food, many are hungry.

Longing for water, many still thirst.

Make us your bread, broken for others,
shared until all are fed.

Christ, be our light!

4. Longing for shelter, many are homeless.
Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us your building, sheltering others,
walls made of living stone.
Christ, be our light!

5. Many the gifts, many the people,
many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another,
making your kingdom come.
Christ, be our light!

Bernadette Farrell

*If you would like to give to the work of our churches please use the
contactless giving point at the back of the church. Thank you.*

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