

# **CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 140**

## **Epiphany Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2022**

**'Virtually Church but with some way to go...'**

### **Welcome**

A very happy New Year. This edition of Cutting Edge Camelot begins with some news items about members of our Ministry Team.

### **Service of thanksgiving for Pam Wood**

The service of thanksgiving for Pam Wood will be at St Michael's North Cadbury on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> January at 2.00 pm. North Cadbury Court has very kindly made available their car parking facilities. Everyone is encouraged to drive up the avenue leading to the church and to use the Court's car park. Please do avoid parking in the village so far as possible as it would be helpful to keep the road through the village clear.

### **Our Curate Anna**

Anna's husband Tim has been assigned a new post within the Fleet Air Arm of the Royal Navy at RNAS Culdrose in Cornwall as from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022.

As a result the whole family will be moving to Cornwall and Anna will be resigning her post as our Assistant Curate. Her last day with us will be 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

We are very sorry that Anna will be leaving us as we have enjoyed and benefited from her ministry among us in very many different ways.

However, we do wish both her and her family well in this new phase of their lives. Anna intends to complete the period of her training curacy in a new post within the Diocese of Truro. We pray that she will quickly find the right post which will build on the experience that she has gained with us.

As we all know, we cannot tell what covid restrictions we may be living under at the end of February. However, when the time comes, we will look at how we can best mark the end of Anna's time with us in the Camelot Parishes.

Anna adds:-

'This news may well be a bit of a surprise, and I am sorry that I have not been able to share it with you in person. Tim, Daniel and I will be very sad to leave the Camelot Parishes; I have so enjoyed my time here and have learnt a huge amount. I have most enjoyed getting to know you all and so it is you, the people, that I will miss most. Hopefully, I'll get to see more of you all over the next couple of months.'

## **Scripture Passages**

*Isaiah 60: 1-6*

Arise, shine; for your light has come,  
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> Nations shall come to your light,  
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

*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, <sup>2</sup> 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.”

<sup>3</sup> When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; <sup>4</sup> and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. <sup>5</sup> They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

<sup>6</sup> ‘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.’”

<sup>7</sup> Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup> 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.”

<sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

## **Reflection**

In my Christmas message I asked about how others might see the face and light of Christ in us. For surely one of our purposes as Christians is to encourage faith in others. But how does this happen? One key is that others see in us something that is different. So if those around us are frustrated and angry and yet we march to a different beat, that of hope, then people are likely to notice this. And although they may not be able to put their finger on exactly what is different about us nevertheless there is an undoubted power in the attraction of the light of Christ.

When we think of mission we often start by asking ourselves what practical projects we might undertake. And although this approach undoubtedly has its value we can take a different starting point, one which is much more bound up with the kind of people we are and the qualities of character that we display.

Often this is the approach to mission that we find in the Old Testament. One example comes from today's reading from the book of Isaiah. This declares the light which God's people bears and the way in which this reflects God's radiant promise, the glory of the Lord. This forms a striking and immediately noticeable contrast with the darkness which envelops other nations around them.

The contrast is an attractive one and forms the backdrop to the prophetic promise that 'Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.' Faith in other words spreads through the light which God's people bear.

As we read these words we may be reminded of our Christmas reading from John's gospel which speaks of light coming into the world with the birth of Christ. This too is associated with the glory and radiance of God's presence.

But what qualities and way of life will we need in order to draw and attract others to God?

As we turn to the famous Christmas story of the coming of the wise men from the East to the infant Jesus we are reminded first of all of the importance of worship in sustaining our life of faith. For as the wise men are drawn by the star to the light of Christ their first response to the presence of Jesus is not to try to think of some worthy activity by which they can serve Him but to stop and be still, to prostrate and pour themselves out at the throne of God.

So on seeing Jesus they kneel down and pay Him homage. This is a sign of worship, a recognition of the importance and the supreme status that they ascribe to Jesus.

In our own language it is instructive to reflect that worship is derived from Old English worthship. This helps us to understand that what we ascribe worth to, we worship. So we ask what it is that we ascribe worth to in our lives? If we answer this question honestly we may find our answers rather uncomfortable. We may find our worth in the quantity of our possessions or perhaps the variety of our life experiences or even in our knowledge and educational attainments.

And all of these can be used by God. The problem, however, arises when any of them occupies the central space in our lives that should be given to God and to Christ. For that is where we will find our true worth and that also will be what we treasure the most.

And the wise men knew and understood this truth. As they worshipped Christ so they poured out their treasure, what was most precious to them, gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, at His feet.

And so there is a natural connection between worship and the generous giving of possessions.

For gold, frankincense and myrrh are, first of all, each of them luxury goods which were not used for everyday activities but reserved for very special occasions.

Gold is perhaps the most obviously precious gift. What, then, is most precious to us? For we need to pour that out in worship to God.

And then we think of the aromatic fragrance of frankincense. Although not everyone may like this smell, we might perhaps think of what we consider to be most sacred and beautiful in our lives. For it is that too that we need to bring to Jesus.

Finally, there is myrrh, another fragrant substance, but this time one which can be used for embalming dead bodies. In the carol *We three kings of Orient are*, myrrh is described as the bitter perfume. As we think of myrrh we remember that on the Cross Jesus was given wine mixed with myrrh to drink and that Nicodemus brought along a mixture of myrrh and aloes to prepare Jesus' body for burial. So the gift of myrrh points us forward to Jesus' death. Perhaps we can see it also as representing our own sorrows and suffering. Are we willing to bring these to God?

So in worship we bring what is most precious and deepest in our lives to God. But more than that worship is also a powerful means of recognising and bearing witness to God and to Christ. So once again there is a powerful connection with mission.

So gold is a royal metal which is symbolic of and appropriate for a king. It points to the royal status of Jesus, our King and Lord. And so we ask who or what we recognise as king in our lives. What is it that we see as being of utmost importance?

Frankincense is used by priests in the place of worship. Do we recognise Jesus as our priest, pathway to God?

And myrrh as we have said points to the suffering of the Cross. Jesus is a King but instead of enjoying a life of wealth and privilege, He is a suffering King who is our Saviour.

As we think about the gifts which the wise men laid at Jesus' feet we might ask ourselves what is most precious in our lives. For it is this that we need to pour out on God's altar. Is it riches, status, a sense of beauty or even our own unresolved suffering and grief? For as we give ourselves to God so also we receive gifts from Him such as peace, joy and light. And in this way we become those who, like the people of God whom Isaiah speaks of, draw others to the light of Christ.

*Tristram*

## **Masks are still back**

Just a reminder to everyone that under the government's Plan B covid restrictions masks are once more mandatory in churches.

## **Points for Prayers**

- Like the wise men pouring out our gifts in worship
- Continuing concerns about the rise in cases of the Omicron variant and any further decisions that need to be made

- Continued thanksgiving for the care, skill and courage of NHS workers and that they will not be overwhelmed by the demands on them in the winter period
- Those whom we know who are facing illnesses of all kinds and have recently been bereaved
- Pam's service of thanksgiving on Tuesday
- Anna and Tim and their future as they prepare for their move to Cornwall
- Bishop Ruth and the rest of the Diocesan staff as they take on additional responsibility in this vacancy in See
- For the choice of a new Bishop, someone who shares God's heart for this Diocese
- For Elliscombe House in Higher Holton now reopened and for its first residents
- For North Cadbury Church School and other local schools as they prepare for their new term
- Prayers and thanksgiving for contributions to the foodbanks and for those helping to take these to the foodbanks.

## **Hymn/Carol**

A famous carol which describes the visit of the wise men to Jesus is 'We three kings of Orient are.'

## **Services for this Sunday and next**

Sunday 2 <sup>nd</sup> January	9.00 am Communion, Yarlington
Sunday 2 <sup>nd</sup> January	9.30 am Camelot Matins, North Cheriton
Sunday 2 <sup>nd</sup> January	11.00 am Group Communion, North Cadbury
Sunday 9 <sup>th</sup> January	9.30 am Communion, Galhampton



Sunday 9 <sup>th</sup> January	9.30 am Communion, North Cheriton
Sunday 9 <sup>th</sup> January	9.30 am Matins, Blackford
Sunday 9 <sup>th</sup> January	11.00 am Sunday Worship, Holton

## **Excalibur**

Excalibur is back in paper form. It contains details of Camelot people, a record of baptisms, weddings and funerals undertaken through the church in the Camelot Parishes. The December and January editions of Excalibur have now been published online at [camelotparishes.co.uk](http://camelotparishes.co.uk) and on each parish's A Church Near You webpage.

## **The Parish Office**

If Rob is not in the Office during normal office hours please contact him via email ([office@camelotparishes.org.uk](mailto:office@camelotparishes.org.uk)) or on 01749 850934.

*Growing as a worshipper, a servant and a family*

*We pray that 'we might live in love,  
as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us'*

(Ephesians 5:2)