

## Welcome

Welcome to the morning service of Tyndale Baptist Church, whether you're here in church or 'on-line' or following the script, whether you're a Tyndale regular or a visitor – you're very welcome and we hope you feel the warmth of that welcome and much more, the warmth of the love of God, to whom this worship is directed.

May we wish you a Happy New Year – of course earthly happiness depends on all kind of things this year – vaccines, an easing of restrictions, catching up with friends and loved ones, perhaps a holiday – but here we seek the more Christian state of things – joy – a Joyful New Year – not dependent on an earthly circumstance, but entirely on the love of God – rather, our awareness of it – so, most of all, we wish you a Joyful New Year, in which we will all become more and more aware of God's love, at work beneath every circumstance

Signed for us in the Christmas story we have just celebrated, and in today's 'Epiphany' theme – the ancient word for the shining light of God all around – seen especially in the baby Jesus in the manger, encountered by the wise ones – not like the great, dramatic epiphanies of old – pillars of fire, thunderous mountains – small, gentle, but bright with a mother's love and a father's care and the prospect and possibility of the baby born – but just as awesome, just as bright, just as joyful.

The reminder of the Covid-19 rules that apply here – no standing, no singing – and thanks for all who have made today possible: stewards, Ian at the desk – and the hope that you will all join in with the hymns and responses 'under your breath'

And again, the wish, on this first Sunday of the year – that we will all encounter God's love shining all around – and know joy in our hearts..

*First voice of dawn,  
last carol of the evening sun,  
Through time eternal  
and what may gloriously be  
you carry me,  
you speak my language,  
Music.*

*How shall we touch the rafters,  
Raise the roof,  
Disturb the sky,  
How shall we mark the rhythm of our days,  
in celebration of the language of the heart,  
You speak my soul.*

*And we shall sing through silence when it falls,  
We shall go deep,  
for twilight and the dawning are bridged  
by the blessed hymns of God.*

[Morning Hymn](#) - Patrick Murray Text - Patricia Orr

## Call to Worship

At the beginning of all things, God..At the start of our lives, God. At the outset of this year – God..It is because of God and his call alone that we are here, that we gather – and it is God alone to whom we direct our worship – in the name of Jesus Christ..

**BPW 189** [As With Gladness, Men of Old](#)

*St Michael's Singers*

## Opening Prayer

First in our hearts, we praise as the wise ones praised as they saw your glory all around;  
First of the ones who are born into freedom, through you we offer the love we have found.  
First of the days when the world found its freedom we come to worship on this day of all;  
First in creation, Jesus the first-born – into the world for freedom, into our hearts one and all.

And as the shepherds came to see, wondering at all that the angel had told;  
And as Anna and Simeon, who had waited to see what would be revealed;  
And as the wise ones brought myrrh, frankincense and gold,  
So we come to see - Jesus - and to worship in the name of Jesus, and to serve and suffer and give, that the world might be healed.

And so we will trust, and believe, and follow, and as God's love shines its light,  
On this day as on the first day; in our ways as in the first ways, Lord Jesus lead us into God's presence,  
Lord Jesus lead us to wait, and pray and do the right...we worship God..

['Waymaker'](#)

*Chicago Church of Christ Virtual Choir*

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

Reading [Isaiah 60:1-6](#)

['10,000 Reasons'](#) (Matt Redman) OneSound & National Methodist Choir GB with NMYBB

Reading [Matthew 2:1-12](#)

### Sermon

In the time of King Herod – as in this time - they came seeking, as we come seeking –

Let's place ourselves, for a moment, alongside those who came seeking - as has been said, 'drawn by what they know to the world's chief mystery' –

that's seeking isn't it? Never has what we know - what virologists have discovered in their petri dishes; what doctors have found out from their treatment regimes, what epidemiologists have deduced from their data crunching, what politicians have learned from their policies..

Never has all this been on the line as much as it is in this time – as the coronavirus continues to surge; as borders are patrolled, as hospitals struggle on and as lives continue to be restricted – *never* has what we have known...drawn us?

Not yet awhile, I think. To be drawn beyond what you know, you have to accept that you've reached the limit of your understanding; you have to reckon with the fact that all your carefully worked out policies and theorems – and the work of think tanks and focus groups and peer review groups and committees - has gone as far as it can go..

And we're not there yet, are we? Were the wise ones – the magi – there? Did they realise that their star-gazing had taken them as far as they could go? Did they accept that their ancient charts held no more secrets? Maybe...maybe that's why they set out to go – towards the world's chief mystery..maybe they realised that there was only one thing to do – to go...

But we're not there yet, are we? The scientists still flank the politicians at the briefings and the commentators still fill the newspaper columns with their opinions and still there is much talk of 'following the science', of 'being ahead of the curve', of 'prospering mightily' – and then there's the Brexit deal, with much talk of sovereignty, and 'taking back control' – and, dare I say, not a little hubris... (the realities of life outside the EU have not yet begun to hit home, I think)

Not yet, at least in public, is humanity prepared to admit that it's reached the end of what it knows; is it ready to seek..though I guess some are – plenty of individuals who've lost loved ones due to Covid 19; plenty of business owners and employees who've lost income; plenty of lonely, isolated folk who haven't seen loved ones for months, will be seeking..

The wise ones came seeking – let's take the seeking as a sign that they realised that they'd reached the limit of what they could know.

See, I think that's what divides our world into two – there are those who continue to look among the things they know for help – the 'science of certainty'; 'We've always done it this way' & 'we just want our country back' politics – who are quite sure that humanity can rise above every circumstance that threatens to do it down – the ordinary people who continue to put their trust in old solutions that are no solutions at all.

And there are those who are ready to look beyond what they know -who are prepared to seek – they are the scientists and artists who are always searching and always discovering new things; they are the politicians who are always striving for new solutions; they are the ordinary folk who have their minds open to new ways and ideas- anyone, really, who is prepared to live by faith.

I like to think that's what the magi were doing, when they set out – they were living by faith – like the vaccination scientists who went beyond the limits of their knowledge to discover new ways of combining proteins and harmless viruses and computer simulations and who worked long into every night to achieve in months what previously took years. Like the doctors and nurses and paramedics who tried everything they could and learnt on every heart-breaking shift how best to treat patients suffering from Covid 19 – like Captain Tom, willing himself to walk beyond the distance his legs were supposed to be able to carry him – like teachers trying to make school work in new ways – like lecturers trying to help students – like hairdressers and florists and restaurateurs and builders and bankers and financiers and drivers and road sweepers and mothers and fathers and children, rising to make new things happen, to combat Covid, to learn how to use Zoom, to reconfigure their businesses, to reach out beyond these Brexit-bordered shores, to welcome strangers, to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, comfort the

mournful, to love – to seek –

In this time, as in the time of King Herod – drawn by what we know towards...what we might yet find? What we might yet discover? What we might yet become? That's faith, I think..that's living by faith..

And what did they find? You know the story; 'they found the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage'.

And I was thinking – that was all they found. We never hear of the magi again; they didn't find the crucified and risen and glorified Christ; they didn't find the Ancient of Days; they didn't find the Prince of Peace. The King of the Ages, the First Born of all creation.

All they found, after a long journey and after the unpleasantness of Herod – was the child with Mary his mother. In a way it's the great hope at the heart of human life – *everything* is potential; at birth *nothing* is known of how any baby might turn out, who he or she might turn into – the very best and worst among us was once a child with his mother.

But that's the great mystery of *this* birth, with its sign in the sky and its place in the prophets and its surrounding portents of doom and its humble parentage – and maybe they imagined, maybe their reading of ancient wisdom helped them,

But to this birth they were drawn, by all that they knew. And here they went beyond all their ancient wisdom and here gave their gifts as signs of their faith in a future yet to be.

It's like that for all of us, I guess. When we come to Christ we do not see him in all his fullness, though we have 2000 years of reflection on who he is, but we come by faith, and we give of ourselves, and – what is it the Bible says? 'Those who seek shall find'

That's Epiphany see. The problem with the world's seekers is that they find all kinds of things and not always good, truthful things – sometimes they find pseudo-science and conspiracy theories and wayward religion and dead-end politics.

But Epiphany means that God shines – his light and truth shines in our world; though the mystery of the baby born and the signs and the tragic life and the glorious rising that follow

It's not the seeking so much that matters, but that the seekers are found – actually I like to think that God's light in Christ shines for everyone, seeking or not – remember it's in the Bible also – *even when we were dead through our trespasses, God made us alive together with Christ— by grace we have been saved—*

Not through anything we have done, not even by seeking, but all through God's doing – that's the mystery to which we are drawn – and at that mystery we will bring our gifts (table): our very selves and proclaim the praise of the Lord

## **CG 17 'Bread is blessed and broken'**

*Tyndale Virtual singing Group*

### **Communion**

#### **Offering & the Grace:**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore, Amen.

#### **Invitation**

The table of the Lord is spread, it is for those who will come and see in broken bread and poured out wine – not mere symbols, but the very substance of his life shed for us on the Cross and raised again the third day. The risen Christ is present among his people and it is here that we meet him. The invitation is for all those who are seeking him and who are weary of their sin and doubt to come and share the feast.

#### **Confession**

Lord our God, here at this table we confess our part in a divided world, where people huddle together for security, and look for their salvation only among the things they already know.

We confess the church's fear and its inward-looking spirit, rarely ready to let the Word of life go in a needy world.

We confess our own limited vision that sees the world only according to our own understanding.

Father forgive us and set us free once more in the spirit of this day to go where you call, and to love and suffer in Jesus' name, who is Lord and Saviour of all.

Listen to the good news, *'Do not be afraid, for I have overcome the World'*

Thanks be to God, Amen.,

#### **Institution**

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you; the Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and said, take, eat, this is my body which is for you, do this in remembrance of me. In the same way after supper he took the cup saying this cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this whenever you drink it in memory of me – for whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

## Thanksgiving – BPW463

Lift up your hearts, we lift them to the Lord. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give him thanks and praise. It is not only right, it is our duty and our joy at all times and in all places to give you thanks and praise, Holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Jesus Christ, you r only Son, our Lord....

Thank you our Father for what you have made and given to us: thank you for who you have given and what He has done for us, than you for giving us the spirit of resurrection, and for what, by that spirit, we may see done in the world – and thank you for this sign, this gateway, this portal, where the good news is once again to be set free in a needy world.

Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we proclaim your great and glorious name, for ever praising you and saying Holy Holy Holy, 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!

God our Father, pour out the Holy Spirit on all your people, that we may have faith, and upon these gifts of bread and wine and this eating and drinking, that this may be for us the mystery of the body and blood of our risen Lord – so that we may receive Christ to ourselves once again, for the strengthening of our faith, the assuring of our hope, and the deepening of our love.

### Responses

**Leader** Here is bread

**All** **The staff of life**

**Leader** Here is wine

**All** **The fruit of the vine**

**Leader** How shall we eat?

**All** **Hungering for freedom:**

**Leader** How shall we drink?

**All** **Thirsting for fullness:**

**Leader** For ourselves and all those who hunger and thirst

**All** **We eat and drink in faith.**

### Bread & Wine

#### Prayer after communion

God of Gold; we have offered our gifts and come seeking your glory; now we pray for a world where the rich grow ever more comfortable while everywhere the poor go to the wall. We ask you to break through such injustice and set us free once more to seek your glory

God of incense; we have prayed; and on many occasions wrestled in our hearts with your mystery; now we pray for a world that casts about for cheap certainties in this dangerous and uncertain time. We ask you to cut through all false sources of security and rekindle a passion for the deep things of your truth.

God of myrrh; we have gathered at the sign of your suffering love and shared here in the world's brokenness and pain; now we pray for a world filled with injustice, despair, and destruction and everywhere filled with anxiety, illness and fear.. We ask you to shine through all our darkness and set our hearts aflame with your hope.

['Thou Whose Almighty Word'](#)

*The Scottish Festival Singers*

### Blessing

*Thanks to Rachel, Sarah, to the Tyndale Singers, to Mike and to Dorette and David for the readings and to Nick & Tina for getting the script out in the post. Thanks to Ian H for producing and recording the service in the church and to Ian W for managing the website. Thanks also to today's stewarding team..*

*A 'together though apart' time follows at 11.30 am*