Choral Eucharist
7th January 2024 – 10.30

The Epiphany

President
The Revd Canon Gregory Platten
Canon Chancellor

Preacher
The Revd Canon Andrew Stead
Canon Precentor

Lichfield Cathedral is called to live and proclaim the transforming love of God. Through the fullness of its life in the Spirit, it seeks to be a sign of the friendship and freedom that God in Jesus Christ has given the whole world to enjoy.
Welcome to your Cathedral. If you’re here with small children, we’re very glad to see you! It’s good to have you with us and joining in the worship. If you’d like one, there are activity bags with simple activities for children and a sheet with activities that follow the readings you’ll hear in the service today - please ask the stewards who welcomed you for one. If you, or your child, needs some time out, you can use St Stephen’s Chapel - straight ahead and to the left of the large hanging cross, near the large font. It has green walls and two entrances. There you’ll find there some stories, and simple craft activities. But please come back when you want! Jesus said, ‘Let the children come to me.’

To our worshippers here without children: children are a sign that the Body of Christ is growing, and a reminder that God is always doing a new thing. Please greet parents, carers and children with a smile.

The Feast of the Epiphany - Our celebration of Christ’s birth continues today as we keep the feast of the Epiphany. 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 (non-Jews). 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.

The season of joyful celebration now continues through the successive days of Epiphany, and the festal cycle ends only with the Feast of the Presentation (Candlemas) when the child who has been manifested to the magi at his birth is now recognised 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.

Abridged from *Common Worship: Times and Seasons*, p.120
Safety
Please always follow any directions given in how we need to move around the Cathedral. In the unlikely event of an emergency, please remain quiet and respond calmly and promptly to the directions of the Vergers.

Spiritual Communion
While some cannot, for a number of reasons, come to Church to receive their communion in person we will continue to incorporate the Spiritual Communion within our worship at the point of the distribution.

Receiving Communion
People will be able to choose whether they wish or not to receive their Holy Communion in the form of wine as well as bread. If you take the chalice, please help the person giving the chalice by guiding the cup to your lips. People are also reminded that we do not allow intinction (dipping the bread into the wine) at the Cathedral. Please follow the instructions given by the Stewards who will direct you to a communion station. Gluten-free bread will be available at each station.

Posture
The order of service indicates whether to sit or stand, however please feel free to adopt the posture that you feel most comfortable with.

Offerings
Your gifts are vital in sustaining our mission and worship. A collection will be taken by the Stewards during the offertory hymn. Please do Gift Aid your donation if you are a UK taxpayer by completing the required details on the envelopes provided. There are electronic giving points where you can tap a debit or credit card; if you need assistance with these devices please do ask a steward or verger. For those worshipping at home, you can text SPIRES to 70191 to give £10, or visit www.lichfield-cathedral.org/donate.

Photography and Livestreaming
Whilst we ask that members of the congregation do not take photographs or video of our worship, please note that at some of our services our Cathedral volunteer photographers will be taking photographs. We are also livestreaming to Facebook or YouTube many of our services. Whilst we do our best to not film the congregation for the livestream, please do let us know if this is a particular issue for you and we will assist by letting you know where you can sit so that you do not appear on screen.
Refreshments
At the end of the service refreshments are available in the North Transept. We do hope that you will join us for a time of fellowship together.

Music
Our service is sung today by the Cathedral Chamber Choir conducted by the Assistant Director of Music, Martyn Rawles. The organ is played by the Honorary Assistant Organist, Liam Condon. The setting for the Eucharist is the Messe de Minuit by Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1643-1704)

Please join in whatever is printed in bold type.

THE GATHERING

Stand

INTROIT HYMN 86 Evelyns

From the eastern mountains, pressing on they come, wise men in their wisdom, to his humble home; stirred by deep devotion, hasting from afar, ever journeying onward, guided by a star.

There their Lord and Saviour meek and lowly lay, wondrous light that led them onward on their way, ever now to lighten nations from afar, as they journey homeward by that guiding star.

Thou who in a manger once hast lowly lain, who dost now in glory o’er all kingdoms reign, gather in the peoples, who in lands afar ne’er have seen the brightness of thy guiding star.

Onward through the darkness of the lonely night, shining still before them with thy kindly light, guide them, Jew and Gentile, homeward from afar, young and old together, by thy guiding star.

Until every nation, whether bond or free, ‘neath thy star-lit banner, Jesu, follow thee o’er the distant mountains to that heavenly home, where nor sin nor sorrow evermore shall come.

Godfrey Thring 1823-1903
THE GREETING

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

Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe. From the rising of the sun to its setting your name is proclaimed in all the world.

The Lord of glory be with you. The Lord bless you.

Remain standing as the President offers further words of welcome

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.

cf Titus 2.11-14

THE RITE OF PENITENCE

A cantor sings each petition, then the choir sings the Kyrie/Christe which all repeat:

God be gracious to us and bless us, and make your face to shine upon us:

Kyrie eleison. (Lord, have mercy)

May your ways be known on the earth, your saving power among the nations:

Christe eleison. (Christ, have mercy)

You, Lord have made known your salvation, and reveal your justice in the sight of the nations:

Kyrie eleison. (Lord, have mercy)
ABSOLUTION

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

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO (choir)

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

Grateful for the glory revealed today through God made flesh, let us pray.

O God, who by the leading of a star manifested your only Son to the peoples of the earth: mercifully grant that we, who know you now by faith, may at last behold your glory face to face; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Sit
OLD TESTAMENT READING  Isaiah 60.1-6

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

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.

This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

A short period of silence is kept.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Stand as the choir sings Alleluia which all repeat

Christ was revealed in flesh, proclaimed among the nations and believed in throughout the world.

cf 1 Timothy 3.16

All sing Alleluia again

Turn towards the reading of the Gospel in the middle of the Nave.
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.
ACCLAMATIONS AT THE PRESENTATION OF THE GIFTS

The organist sounds a fanfare and then continues to improvise as gifts of gold, incense and myrrh, together with representations of the magi, are presented at the Altar. These will be taken to the crib at the end of the Eucharist.

Three prayers of blessing are said:

At the offering of gold

Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe:
to you be praise and glory for ever.
As gold in the furnace is tried and purified seven times in the fire, so purify our hearts and minds that we may be a royal priesthood acceptable in the service of your kingdom.
Blessed be God for ever.

At the offering of incense

Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe:
to you be praise and glory for ever.
As our prayer rises up before you as incense, so may we be presented before you with penitent hearts and uplifted hands to offer ourselves in your priestly service.
Blessed be God for ever.

At the offering of myrrh

Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe:
to you be praise and glory for ever.
As you give medicine to heal our sickness and the leaves of the tree of life for the healing of the nations, so anoint us with your healing power that we may be the first-fruits of your new creation.
Blessed be God for ever.
We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible:

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father. And he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead: whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spake by the prophets. And we believe one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. And we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.
Father, the wise men came from the east to worship your Son: 
grant to Christians everywhere a true spirit of adoration. 
Lord, in your mercy: hear our prayer.

Father, your Son is the King of kings and Lord of lords: 
grant an abundance of peace to your world. 
Lord, in your mercy: hear our prayer.

Father, the Holy Family shared the life of the people of Nazareth: 
protect in your mercy our neighbours and families, 
together with the whole community of which we are part. 
Lord, in your mercy: hear our prayer.

Father, your Son was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor: 
show your love for the poor and powerless, 
and strengthen those who suffer. 
Lord, in your mercy: hear our prayer.

Father, the wise men presented to your Son gold, incense and myrrh: 
accept the gifts we bring, 
and the offering of our hearts at the beginning of this new year. 
Lord, in your mercy: hear our prayer.

Father, you are the King of heaven, the hope of all who trust in you: 
give to the faithful departed the wonders of your salvation. 
Lord, in your mercy: hear our prayer.

Rejoicing in the fellowship of wise men, shepherds and angels, 
and of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph, 
we commend ourselves and all Christian people to your unfailing love.

Silence is kept

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

Stand, if you are able.
THE Liturgy OF THE SACRAMENT

THE Peace

Our Saviour Christ is the Prince of Peace.
Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end.  

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

The Deacon of the Gospel says

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

All may exchange the peace with their neighbour.

Preparation OF THE Table

A collection is taken to support the mission and ministry of the Cathedral. Please give as generously as you are able and, if you are a UK taxpayer, use the Gift Aid envelopes provided.

Offertory Hymn 89 Was Lebet

O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; bow down before him, his glory proclaim; with gold of obedience, and incense of lowliness, kneel and adore him, the Lord is his name.

Low at his feet lay thy burden of carefulness: high on his heart he will bear it for thee, comfort thy sorrows, and answer thy prayerfulness, guiding thy steps as may best for thee be.

Fear not to enter his courts in the slenderness of the poor wealth thou wouldst reckon as thine: truth in its beauty, and love in its tenderness, these are the offerings to lay on his shrine.

These, though we bring them in trembling and fearfulness, he will accept for the name that is dear; mornings of joy give for evenings of tearfulness, trust for our trembling and hope for our fear.
O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; 
bow down before him, his glory proclaim; 
with gold of obedience, and incense of lowliness, 
kneel and adore him, the Lord is his name!

J S B Monsell 1811-1875

Remain standing

TAKING OF THE BREAD AND WINE

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

All honour and praise be yours always and everywhere, 
mighty creator, ever-living God, 
through Jesus Christ your only Son our Lord: 
for at this time we celebrate your glory made present in our midst. 
In the coming of the Magi 
the King of all the world was revealed to the nations. 
In the waters of baptism Jesus was revealed as the Christ, 
the Saviour sent to redeem us.

In the water made wine 
the new creation was revealed at the wedding feast. 
Poverty was turned to riches, sorrow into joy.
Therefore with all the angels of heaven
we lift our voices to proclaim the glory of your name
and sing our joyful hymn of praise:

**SANCTUS AND BENEDICTUS** *(choir)*

*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.*

Accept our praises, heavenly Father,
through your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ,
and as we follow his example and obey his command,
grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit
these gifts of bread and wine may be to us his body and his blood;

who, in the same night that he was betrayed,
took bread and gave you thanks; he broke it and gave it to his disciples,
saying: Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way, after supper he took the cup and gave you thanks;
he gave it to them, saying: 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.

Therefore, heavenly Father, we remember his offering of himself
made once for all upon the cross;
we proclaim his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension;
we look for the coming of your kingdom,
and with this bread and this cup
we make the memorial of Christ your Son our Lord.
Accept through him, our great high priest,
this our sacrifice of thanks and praise,
and as we eat and drink these holy gifts
in the presence of your divine majesty,
renew us by your Spirit, inspire us with your love
and unite us in the body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through him, and with him, and in him,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
with all who stand before you in earth and heaven,
we worship you, Father almighty,
in songs of everlasting praise:

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**Blessing and honour and glory and power**
be yours for ever and ever. Amen.

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**THE LORD’S PRAYER**

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

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.

**BREAKING OF THE 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.
GIVING OF COMMUNION

God’s holy gifts
for God’s holy people.

Jesus Christ is holy, Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

The President receives Holy Communion and then leads the Spiritual Communion for those who are prevented from receiving their communion, and worshipping with us from home. We invite those in the Cathedral to pray quietly for them as the President leads them in prayer.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION (for those worshipping online)

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ,
for all the benefits you have given me,
for all the pains and insults you have borne for me.
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,
I ask you to come spiritually into my heart.
O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,
may I know you more clearly, love you more dearly,
and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.

Those of any Christian denomination who are accustomed to receiving Holy Communion in their own churches are invited to do so here. Please follow the directions given by the Stewards who will indicate which communion station you should go to. If you do not normally receive communion, please do come forward to receive a prayer of blessing. Gluten free hosts are available at each station for those who require them.

AGNUS DEI (choir)

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us; grant us peace.

MOTET Bethlehem Down - Music — Peter Warlock (1894-1930)

“When He is King we will give Him the Kings’ gifts, Myrrh for its sweetness, and gold for a crown, Beautiful robes,” said the young girl to Joseph, Fair with her firstborn on Bethlehem Down.
Bethlehem Down is full of the starlight,  
Winds for the spices, and stars for the gold;  
Mary for sleep, and for lullaby music,  
Songs of a shepherd by Bethlehem fold.

When He is King, they will clothe Him in gravesheets,  
Myrrh for embalming, and wood for a crown;  
He that lies now in the white arms of Mary,  
Sleeping so lightly on Bethlehem Down.

Here He has peace and a short while for dreaming,  
Close-huddled oxen to keep Him from cold;  
Mary for love, and for lullaby music,  
Songs of a shepherd by Bethlehem fold.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Kneel or sit

Let us pray:

Lord God, the bright splendour whom the nations seek:  
may we who with the wise men have been drawn by your light  
discern the glory of your presence in your Son,  
the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PROCESSION TO THE CRIB

The representations of the Magi are carried in procession to the Crib

The Thurifer, Crucifer and Acolytes are followed by the ministers, the choir and then the people. All gather around the Crib as the figures are placed around the Holy Family and are censed. The following hymn is sung in procession.

HYMN 83 Dix

1. As with gladness men of old did the guiding star behold,  
as with joy they hailed its light,  
leading onward, beaming bright;  
so, most gracious Lord, may we evermore be led to thee.

2. As with joyful steps they sped,  
Saviour, to thy lowly bed,  
there to bend the knee before thee whom heaven and earth adore;  
so may we with willing feet ever seek thy mercy-seat.
3. As they offered gifts most rare
at thy cradle rude and bare,
so may we with holy joy,
pure and free from sin’s alloy,
all our costliest treasures bring,
Christ, to thee, our heavenly King.

4. Holy Jesus, every day
keep us in the narrow way,
and, when earthly things are past,
bring our ransomed souls at last
where they need no star to guide,
where no clouds thy glory hide.

5. In the heavenly country bright
need they no created light;
thou its light, its joy, its crown,
thou its sun which goes not down;
there for ever may we sing
alleluias to our King.

William Chatterton Dix 1837-1898

THE DISMISSAL

ACCLAMATION

Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe.
To you be glory and praise for ever.

From the rising of the sun to its setting
your name is proclaimed in all the world.
To you be glory and praise for ever.

When the time had fully come you sent the Sun of Righteousness.
In him the fullness of your glory dwells.
To you be glory and praise for ever.

THE DISMISSAL GOSPEL

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.
Glory to you, O Lord.

Simeon took the child Jesus 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 in Israel.’

Luke 2.28-32

This is the Gospel of the Lord: Praise to you, O Christ.
THE BLESSING OF THE CHALK

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Bless + O Lord God,
this creature chalk to render it helpful to your people.
Grant that they who use it in faith
and with it inscribe upon the entrance of their homes
the names of your saints, Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar,
may through their merits and intercession enjoy health of body

At the end of the service everyone is invited to take a piece of chalk home with
them, together with the explanatory paper which includes prayers that can be
used as the doors are chalked.

THE BLESSING

The Lord be with you: and also with you.

May God the Father,
who led the wise men by the shining of a star
to find the Christ, the Light from light,
lead you in your 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 your hearts and fill our lives with his joy and peace. Amen.

And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

The Deacon of the Gospel says

We have seen his glory, the glory revealed to all the nations.
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.
Remain standing as the choir and clergy depart

ORGAN VOLUNTARY
Toccata and Fugue in F
Dieterich Buxtehude.(c.1637-1707)

Please do stay for refreshments, these are served in the North Transept.

LATER TODAY

15:30 Solemn Choral Evensong for the Epiphany
18:00 Epiphany Carol Service

If you would like to be kept informed of services and events at Lichfield Cathedral please do get in touch with us.

Our general ’phone number is 01543 306100

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