



**The Benefice of St.Mary, Alderley and St.Catherine, Birtles**  
**The Family Service: the Season of Epiphany**

**In the Western churches, the Epiphany** became an occasion to celebrate the visit of the far-travelled magi, understood as the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles.

**In this perspective,** Epiphany-tide 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 arrangement of the Sundays of Epiphany** in the church's calendar deliberately draws out these aspects.

**The season of joyful celebration** that begins at Christmas ends with the Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple (Candlemas). The baby 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'.

Alleluia, alleluia.

We have seen his star at its rising,  
and have come to pay him homage. *Matthew 2.2*

## Welcome to worship

### We sing a hymn

#### The Collect for Purity

**All: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open,  
all desires known,  
and from whom no secrets are hidden:  
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may perfectly love you,  
and worthily magnify your holy name;  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

#### Invitation to the General Confession

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.  
*(Titus 2.11-14)*

Let us confess our sins.

#### General Confession

God be gracious to us and bless us,  
and make your face shine upon us:  
Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

May your ways be known on the earth,  
your saving power among the nations:  
Christ, have mercy.

**Christ, have mercy.**

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

**Lord, have mercy.**

**Absolution**

## **The Collect for Epiphany**

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.**

**We may say one of the Psalms that is set for today**

**The Introduction to the Bible reading/s**

**One or more readings from the Bible**

**We sing a hymn**

**One or more readings from the Bible**

**The Address**

**The Apostles Creed**

**I BELIEVE in God, the Father Almighty,  
Maker of heaven and earth:  
And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord,  
Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,  
Born of the Virgin Mary, Suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
Was crucified, dead, and buried: He descended into hell;  
The third day he rose again from the dead;  
He ascended into heaven,  
And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;  
From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Ghost; The holy Catholick Church;  
The Communion of Saints; The Forgiveness of sins;  
The Resurrection of the body,  
And the Life everlasting. Amen. 3**

**We sing a hymn**

## Prayers of Intercession and Thanksgiving

Let us worship the Saviour with joy  
and make our prayer to our heavenly Father.  
The magi came from the east to worship your Son:  
Father, grant to Christians everywhere  
the spirit of adoration ...

Lord of glory,

**All: hear our prayer.**

The infant Christ received gifts of gold, incense and  
myrrh:

Father, accept the offering of our hearts and minds  
at the beginning of this year

Lord of glory,

**All: hear our prayer.**

The kingdoms of this world have become  
the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ:

Father, grant an abundance of peace to your world ...

Lord of glory,

**All: hear our prayer.**

The Holy Family lived in exile and in the shadow of death:  
Father, look in mercy on all who are poor and powerless,  
and all who suffer ...

Lord of glory,

**All: hear our prayer.**

Your Son shared the life of his home and family at Naza-  
reth:

Father, protect in your love our neighbours,  
our families and this community of which we are a part ...

Lord of glory,

**All: hear our prayer.**

Father, we rejoice in our fellowship  
with the shepherds, the angels, the magi,  
the Virgin Mary, Saint Joseph  
and all the faithful departed.

In your unfailing love for us and for all people,  
hear and answer our prayers through your Son,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ.

**All: Amen.**

## The Lord's Prayer

**We sing a hymn**

## The Blessing

**Acknowledgements.**  
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