

Ardoch Parish Church
Sunday 2nd January 2022



Journeying with the Wise Men

Today we remember and celebrate the arrival of the Magi, those mysterious and devoted Wise Men who travelled so far to welcome the Christ and offer their gifts.

As we recall the journey of the Magi, we can explore the journey we make as individuals and as a church community, and think where this might lead us as we emerge from the difficult journeys of the past couple of years, with renewed hope and belief that Jesus walks beside us.

Peter Scott leads the Service today along with members of the Kirk Session

We welcome you and sincerely hope by following the printed service sheet it helps you feel included and part of our Church community

We say the Lord's Prayer
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 debts, as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen

Fill your hearts with joy and gladness, is one of around four hundred hymns, including "Tell Out, my Soul" written by Timothy Dudley Smith who is 95 years old.

Fill your hearts with joy and gladness
sing and praise your God and mine!
Great the Lord in love and wisdom,
might and majesty divine!
He who framed the starry heavens
knows and names them as they shine

Praise the Lord, his people, praise him!
Wounded souls his comfort know.
those who fear him find his mercies,
peace for pain and joy for woe;
humble hearts are high exalted,
human pride and power laid low.

Praise the Lord for times and seasons,
cloud and sunshine, wind and rain;
spring to melt the snows of winter
till the waters flow again;
grass upon the mountain pastures,
golden valleys thick with grain.

Fill your hearts with joy and gladness,
peace and plenty crown your days!
love his laws, declare his judgements,
walk in all his words and ways;
he the Lord and we his children,
praise the Lord, all people, praise!

Based on Psalm 147

Heather McDonald leads the Prayer of Adoration and Confession

In the beginning, O God, there was...nothing...
or nothing yet that made any sense.
There was chaos, and a thick fog of confusion,
much like the confusion we feel as we look back over the year just

gone, and wonder what it all means, what good purpose it can possibly have.

The fog is dense with questions and dangers always threatening to penetrate the flimsy mask of faith.

There are wars still and rumours of more to come.

We know now why our ancestors were afraid of "the pestilence that walketh in darkness"

We have felt the earth's foundations tremble, have heard the sea-waters roar and foam,

have watched in horror as cities were reduced to rubble in front of our very eyes.

Creator God, we need no reminders of the darkness:

what we do need is a glimpse of the light which alone can dispel it.

We do not need to be convinced that life is chaotic:

what we do need is to hear your voice telling us that you made us, and you love us.

Telling us that you are not vengeful or uncaring, but infinitely compassionate and kind.

Your voice telling us you are not far away in the outer reaches of space,

but here with us and among us, full of grace and truth.

Living God, may we be drawn once again to the Light that gives life in all its fullness.

May we be still enough to hear your Word of life,

and brave enough to respond by stepping out in faith, and hope and love, trusting you to keep us safe to our life's end and new beginning.

Amen

Bob Aitken reads from Matthew Chapter 2 v 1-12 The Magi Visit the Messiah

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

“But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for out of you will come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel.”

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

Hymn 319 Of the Father’s love begotten

Of the Father’s love begotten
Ere the worlds began to be,
He is Alpha and Omega,
He the source, the ending he,
Of the things that are, that have been,
And that future years shall see,
Evermore and evermore

By his word was all created;
He commanded; it was done;
Heaven and earth and depths of ocean,
Universe of three in one;
All that sees the moon’s soft shining,
All that breathes beneath the sun,
Evermore and evermore.

O that birth for ever blessed,
When the Virgin, full of grace,
By the Spirit’s power conceiving,
Bore the Saviour of our race
And the Babe, the world’s Redeemer,
First revealed his sacred face,
Evermore and evermore.

This is he whom seers and sages
Sang of old with one accord,
Whom the voices of the prophets
Promised in their faithful word;
Now he shines, the long-expected;
Let creation praise its Lord,
Evermore and evermore.

All the heights of heaven, adore him;
Angel hosts, his praises sing;
Powers, dominions bow before him,
And extol our God and King;
Let no tongue on earth be silent,
Every voice in concert ring,
Evermore and evermore.

Christ to thee, with God the Father,
And, O Holy Ghost, to thee,
Hymn and chant and high thanksgiving,
And unwearied praises be,
Honour, glory and dominion,
And eternal victory,
Evermore and evermore.

Words: Prudentius, translated John Mason Neale
Music: from Piae Cantiones

Liz Paterson reflects on the journeying of the Wise Men

As with gladness men of old was written by William Chatterton Dix (1837-1898) who was an English writer of over 40 hymns and carols. Dix spent most of his life as manager of a Maritime Insurance Company in Glasgow. At the age of 29 he was struck with a near fatal illness and consequently suffered months confined to his bed. During this time he became severely depressed. Yet it is from this period that many of his hymns date.

As with gladness men of old
Did the guiding star behold,
As with joy they hailed its light,
Leading onwards, beaming bright
So most gracious lord, may we

Evermore be led to thee.

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.

As they offered gifts most rare
At thy homely cradle 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.

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.

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.

Words: William Chatterton Dix Music: Conrad Kocher

Barbara McLaren leads us in the Prayer for Others and Ourselves

Our God, we are glad, some of us, that Christmas is past,
others can't wait for it to come again,
but whatever it has left behind,
the memories of happy times spent together or alone,
or of difficult times with other people or on our own.
may we take with us into the new year
the deep truth that the stories and carols
were meant to reveal, that we are not alone, for you are with us.
The eternal one has become mortal
the Word has become flesh and lives among us.

In the light of this incredible claim,
we offer prayer to you, the God-in-our-midst,
for all who feel alone, and who desperately
need someone to walk alongside them,
may we be companions to each other.

You came into the world that you had made, O God, and the world
did not know you.

We pray for any in our world today who are not recognised for who
they are:

those whose talents have not been nurtured;

whose smile has not been returned;

those whose face does not fit,

those who are treated, for any reason, as anything less than a
beloved child of God.

You came to your own people
and even they would not accept you.

We pray for those for whom Christmas

and New Year are not the happy family time that the media-
and too often our churches- tell us that they should be:

those who were on their own, and longed for company;

those who were lonely in a crowded room.

May they know that you were with them, still are and always will be.

God, you came in Jesus as, the Light for the world's darkness.

May we who dare to call ourselves Christians speak with his words of
grace and shine out with the light of his love.

Amen

**Our final hymn is God of Eternity written by John Bell, born in
Kilmarnock in Ayrshire, he had intended to be a music teacher
when he felt the call to the ministry.**

The God of all eternity,
Unbound by space yet always near;
Is present where his people meet
To celebrate the coming year.

What shall we offer God today –
Our dreams of things that might yet be,
Or, with eyes fastened to the past,
Our dread of what we cannot see?

God does not share our doubts and fears,
Nor shrinks from the unknown or strange;
The one who fashioned heaven and earth
Makes all things new and ushers change.

Let faith or fortune rise and fall,
Let apprehension have its day;
Those whom God loves walk unafraid
With Christ for guide and Christ their way.

Author & Composer J L Bell

Charles Robertson leads us in the Blessing as we journey into the New Year

May your eyes be opened to the wonder of the daily miracles around you and your sense of mystery be deepened.

May you be aware of the light that shines in the darkness, and that the darkness can never put out.

May you be blessed with companions on the journey, friends who will listen to you and encourage you with their presence.

May you learn to live with what is unsolved in your heart, daring to face the questions and holding them until, one day, they find their answers.

May you find the still, quiet place inside yourself where you can know and experience the peace that passes understanding.

May love flow in you and through you to those who need your care.

May you continue to dream dreams and to reach out into the future with a deeper understanding of God's way for you.

Amen

Intimations

The Guild Committee has decided to cancel the Guild meeting on 6th January in light of the more rapid spread of Covid in the past few weeks.

The January Singalong too has been cancelled.

All contributors please note items for the Link should be with Gordon Roy by Wednesday 5th January 2022

Next Sunday, 9th January we welcome Gordon Roy as our preacher as Rev Mairi is on holiday.