

Dear all,

Happy (almost) New Year.

At the risk of introducing a pagan element to this letter, you will probably know that the month January is named after the Roman god Janus. Janus was a 2-faced god – not a description of his morals, but one face looked back to the past, the other towards the future. We too have a tendency to do this at the start of a new year.

This New Year is one we might face with a degree of uncertainty, apprehension even. Last year much of our Christmas arrangements were cancelled. This year, we were mostly able to follow our plans – albeit with some modifications. Our plans for services in church were largely able to follow the normal pattern. We had a Christingle, where we did not blow out the candles. We had a traditional 9 Lessons and Carols. We had a largely static Crib Service, with a pantomime-style storytelling. I must admit, I missed a trick when the kings come to Herod – “where is the child born to be King of the Jews?” “He’s behind you!”

Congregation numbers were, understandably, somewhat down on our usual figures. People are still unsure how safe they will be. There is, of course, no guarantee, but we are following strict protocols as they are currently understood – compulsory masks (unless officially exempt), hand sanitising, sanitising after services, etc.. We expect this will continue for the foreseeable future.

This does, of course, also give a hit to our finances. We are really struggling at the moment – see Simon’s comment in the January magazine (appearing soon) – especially regarding cash in the plate. I would encourage you to consider other ways of giving – for example, either by standing order, or via the website.

We have recently invested in a mobile wi-fi for the church and hall, which seems to be 100% reliable so far. This is at a cost, but it does mean that we can keep in touch with those who do not feel able to attend the service in person.

This Sunday is the Second Sunday in Christmas, but we are also allowed to celebrate Epiphany (actually on Thursday 6th). The 9.00am Communion will celebrate the former, the 10.15 First Sunday Praise service the latter.

The hymns for the morning are: [Shine Jesus Shine - Graham Kendrick \(Original Version\) - YouTube](#); [Longing for Light, We Wait in Darkness \(Christ be Our Light: 5vv+refrain\) \[lyrics for congregations\] - YouTube](#); [We Three Kings Of Orient Are : Kings College, Cambridge - YouTube](#); [We Are Marching \(Siyahamba\) - YouTube](#)

You might also be amused by the ‘Epic’ version (Lord of the Rings-style!). Interestingly, they can’t bring themselves to mention God! [We Three Kings Of Orient Are \(Epic Version\) - A HERO FOR THE WORLD - YouTube](#)

The readings for Christmas 2 are Jeremiah 31:7-14; Ephesians 1:3-14 and John 1:10-18. The Psalm is 147:13-end

The readings for Epiphany are Isaiah 60: 1-6; Ephesians 3: 1-12 and Matthew 2:1-12. The Psalm is 72:10-15.

Psalm 72 Anglican Chant [Psalm 72 "Give the King Thy Judgements" - YouTube](#) (from our own Lincoln Cathedral).

The Psalm Project version: [Prayer for the king \(Psalm 72\) - YouTube](#)

Anthems suggested include:

[Bethlehem Down \(Peter Warlock\) - YouTube](#)

[Howells: "Here Is The Little Door" - YouTube](#)

[Lo! Star-led Chiefs - Crotch - YouTube](#) (we always did wonder what Assyrian odours might be, especially if they had been travelling on camels for a long time!).

[King's College Cambridge 2014 #16 The Three Kings Peter Cornelius - YouTube](#)

[Poulenc | Videntes stellam \[á 4; Netherlands Chamber Choir\] - YouTube](#)

For those wishing to reflect on the Christmas just past, the poet Malcolm Guite has posted on his blog the poem Christmas (1) by George Herbert.

After all pleasures as I rid one day,
My horse and I, both tir'd, bodie and minde,
With full crie of affections, quite astray,
I took up in the next inne I could finde,
There when I came, whom found I but my deare,
My dearest Lord, expecting till the grief
Of pleasures brought me to him, readie there
To be all passengers most sweet relief?
O Thou, whose glorious, yet contracted light,
Wrapt in night's mantle, stole into a manger;
Since my dark soul and brutish is thy right,
To Man of all beasts be not thou a stranger:
Furnish & deck my soul, that thou mayst have
A better lodging than a rack or grave.



Stay safe.

Blessings and love

Mark