

- Leader:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. (Invite those present to pause for a few moment of silent reflection and to offer any special intentions.)
- This past Sunday, we celebrated the Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord in which we mark the revelation of Jesus to the entire world.
- Narrator:** In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking,
- All:** 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.
- Narrator:** 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,
- All:** In Bethlehem of Judea; for 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.’
- Narrator:** 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,
- Herod:** 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.
- Narrator:** 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.
- Leader:** This feast day is rich in significance for us. Through the presence of these foreign wise men at the birth place of Jesus, our Church teaches that all peoples of the world are now invited into relationship with God as redeemed heirs of the Kingdom. Through the Incarnation – the birth, ministry, death and resurrection of Christ – God’s wondrous plan of salvation is now open to all. As this reading reveals, however, it is up to us to choose our response to this invitation. Will we, like King Herod, respond in fear, deceit and violence? Or will we, like the Magi, acknowledge Jesus as our king and offer him our very best? We pray:
- All:** By the light of a star, O God of the universe, you guided the nations to the Light of the world. Until this Redeemer comes again in glory, we, with the Magi, seek the face of the Savior. Summon us with all those who thirst now to the banquet of love. May our hunger be filled and our thirst quenched with your word of truth. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen.