

January 2025

Bishop Libby writes...

I hope you've had a joyful Christmas. I hope you have had opportunity to enjoy the celebration of Jesus' birth with friends and family.

I love this season following Christmas day which includes the festival of Epiphany, remembering the arrival of the wise men after their long journey. They brought their precious gifts to honour the child, though born in a simple stable, they knew to be a king.

As we start a new calendar year, this church season from Christmas day to Candlemas (at the beginning of February) we have chance to think again about what difference Jesus makes to our lives. In the stories of the gospels, no one who met the Christ child was unchanged. Whoever they were, how ever they came to find him, their lives were transformed by the encounter. After meeting Jesus, the wise men went back to the places they had come from – but by a different route. They thought and behaved differently because they met Jesus.

The past year has seen so much change globally, nationally, locally, for our church and, for many of us, personally. For some, perhaps for many, that has been difficult: we have all seen stories of violence and disaster and trauma and may have experienced it ourselves. I pray you may also have known times of peace and joy and love.

After all the noise and business of December, when the parties are over and the decorations put away, we return to 'life as usual' among the people we share life with - at home, at work, at school, at leisure, in our street and community, in our churches. But, like the wise men, we too might choose to be and do all that differently because of Jesus.



As we consider the Epiphany story, I wonder what it means for us. I wonder how you first heard of Jesus and what He means to you now? I wonder how you will honour Him through this coming year?

In our churches across the diocese, we will be thinking again through the year how we respond to the good news of Jesus. How can we deepen our relationship with God, serve our local contexts, challenge injustice, and make new disciples – that others, in our generation, whoever they are and wherever they come from, may encounter Christ and be changed, for good.

I pray this Christmas you, like the wise men, encountered Jesus, and that He is at the heart of a more loving, more joyful and more peaceful new year.

+ Libby Derby