

In that knowledge, and in our simple faith, we bring our prayers for your creation and for the people of this world.

•O Christ we open ourselves in prayer for:  
[Silence for personal prayer or invite others to open prayer in between each]

Your creation ...  
*Silence*

For others we have heard about throughout our world ...  
*Silence*

For other people we know and are close to ...  
*Silence*

For our church and our wider community ...  
*Silence*

For ourselves ...  
*Silence*

## Closing Responses & Blessing

Eternal God, you brought light out of darkness and by light you led the listening wise to a child, who through life and death is the light of the world.

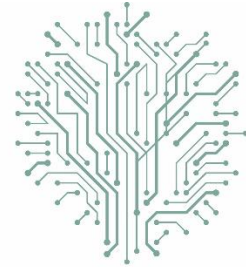
So lead us in your light as we go from here today.

**Let your light shine upon us, to guide and to lead.**

**Bless us and the people we meet along the way.**

**Father,  
Son  
and Holy Spirit.**

**Amen.**



SALTBUSH  
UNITING THE SCATTERED COMMUNITY

## Simple worship for the scattered Christian community

Matthew 2: 1-12  
Epiphany –  
The visit of the Wise Men

## Welcome

An opportunity to welcome people to the gathering

## Responses & Gathering Prayer

Let us come as the wise, or come as the foolish.  
Come as the shepherds, or come as the landowners.  
Come as those who say they know much, or those who say they understand little.  
Come from the town, or come from the land.  
Let us come as we are to worship.

Let us pray.  
Lord, help us to still ourselves in this time together, to listen, to watch, to be open to you.

**Lord, as we come today, so you come to us.**

Lord, help us to be open to new things, even things we don't understand, that we will be open to wonders and signs.

**Lord, as we come today, so you come to us.**

Lord, let us be open to your ways amongst us.  
Forgiveness – light and life – Spirit – community – hope – peace – leading – love.

**Lord, as we come today, so you come to us.  
Amen.**

## Music for Reflection

Suggested song: **As with Gladness**

<https://richjens.bandcamp.com/track/as-with-gladness>

Carols © Richard Jensen

## Passing the Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

You are invited to turn to those around you and offer them a word of greeting and peace.

## The Word around the Bush

**Matthew 2: 1-12.**

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, 2 asking, "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." 3 When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; 4 and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. 5 They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

6 '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[d] my people Israel.'"

7 Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. 8 Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "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." 9 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. 10 When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. 11 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. 12 And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

## The Message

From your Scattered Community Minister or another leader within your gathering.

## Questions for conversation

- I wonder what you have heard and thought from the Word today?
- I wonder what you heard in the Word for our church?
- What one action can you or your church take in response to the Word today?

## Silence in Two Ways

Spend some time in silence sitting still (suggested 5 minutes). Close your eyes lightly. Sit relaxed but alert.

- You may like to say the prayer phrase "Mar-an-ath-a" (which means come Lord). Say this as four syllables. Do not try to think or imagine anything. If thoughts or distractions come simply return to saying the word.
- Or you may like "sitting with God" — a silent time in which we focus all our mind, heart and soul on the presence of God without trying to create it. Simply be still and open to God.

## Prayers for Others

Eternal God,  
where there is hope, you are there.  
Where there is compassion and the desire for wholeness, you are there.  
Where there is the struggle for peace, you are there.  
Where the hungry are fed, and the poor empowered, you are there.  
Where there is delight in the trees of the land, or the depths of the seas, you are there.  
Wherever love is announced, you are there.

In you is such longing for your creation, and for humanity, and we thank you for that presence of you, in Spirit, in people, renewing, calling, and saving.