



Circuit Contact

Welcome to our Circuit Worship for

4th January 2026 Prepared by Rev Julie Hassall

Worship in the following locations:

Boundary Methodist Church - At 18:00pm - With Deacon Peter Ogle

Wellspring Methodist Church, Cheadle- With Rev Julie Hassall

Endon Methodist Church - At 10:00am - With Ms Gill Meredith

Ipstones Methodist Church - At 10:30am - Local Arrangement

Onecote Methodist Church - At 11:00am - Ms Heather Hayward

Rudyard Methodist Church - At 11:00am - With Rev Denise Williamson - Covenant
Service/Holy Communion

St Andrews Methodist Church, Cheddleton - At 10:30am - With Rev Joyce Smith

The Gathering At St Andrews, Cheddleton - At 15:00pm

Trinity Church, Leek - At 10:30am - With Mr Dennis Johnson

Waterhouses Methodist Church - At 18:30pm - Local Arrangement

Wetley Rocks Methodist Church - At 10:30am- With Dr Lynne Bradbury



Call to Worship

To those excitedly searching the night sky, Christ comes,

To those anxiously waiting in a dark place, Christ comes,

To those who today are journeying, through joy or despair, Christ comes,

Jesus, the Light of the World has come!

Reading - Isaiah Chapter 60 (New International Version)

"Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD rises upon you.

² See, darkness covers the earth
and thick darkness is over the peoples,
but the LORD rises upon you
and his glory appears over you.

³ Nations will come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

**Hymn - [BRIGHTEST AND BEST OF THE SONS OF THE MORNING BY REGINALD HEBER](#)
- [YouTube](#)**

Prayer

God of light and life,

As the baubles and tinsel are packed away for another year,

As the sparkling lights are extinguished and a new year rolls round,

Help us to give thanks for those who are still travelling to see the infant Jesus,

For those who are still seeking a King, discerning meaning and purpose,

And help us to remember today all those who have encouraged us to search for deeper understanding in our lives.

As we worship, help us to expect you in the unexpected people and places, to look for you in the rising sun and the darkness of the night sky. Help us to be aware of you in joy and in sorrow.

Lift our eyes to glimpse your star, bringing hope and strength and peace. Amen.

Reading - [Matthew 2:1-12 NIV - The Magi Visit the Messiah - After - Bible Gateway](#)

Reflection

Wise men, Kings, Magi, strangers, outsiders - captivated by something they had never before seen in the night sky. A magical story of curiosity and dedication to that sense they had that something really special was going on here!

We like to place them in the stable with the other characters of this great narrative - it creates a 'tidy' and complete picture of a beautiful and heartwarming tale. The reality is of course, slightly different in that the kings (the story doesn't tell us how many there were, only that they brought three gifts!) arrived sometime after the birth of the Holy Child - many months after!

Their story is also on some level troubling, for alongside their genuine searching for truth, Matthew tells us that there are others who are seeking to manipulate them and use them for another agenda altogether!

As you re-read this beautiful, yet slightly troubling narrative, with its barely concealed hints at trouble yet to come, what does God say to you? Spend a few moments now, just reading it again - read it slowly, then pause and read it again, noticing the words which jump out for you....and offer your thoughts to God.

Here's what jumped out at me...

- Over the last year I have been amazed at the number of experiences I have had in and through which I have glimpsed something of the glory of heaven - in people and situations where I had not expected that encounter. And it strikes me that 'the

church' is not always very good at embracing such revelations, thinking ourselves the custodians of the whole truth (and not being particularly open to what others, strangers, travellers have to teach us)!

These travellers offered very strange gifts for a new-born baby - I wonder what the parents made of their treasures? Did they know anything of the significance of Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh? Or did they simply realise that here were people who had come looking for a King, and welcome whatever they had brought with them as part of a precious and sacred act of devotion?

How do our churches engage with the communities around them in such a way as to welcome what others bring, genuinely seeking comfort, encounter, peace, transformation - without feeling the need to control how people behave, or where they sit, or what they believe, or how loudly they sing....?

Perhaps as this life-changing story comes full circle again for another year, we can together think through how others might be invited into its beauty in 2026, without the need to manage or control - and in doing that somehow become a bridge between earth and heaven. That would be a really good year!

What does this story say to you? How does the One whose glory rises upon you (for it does, you know!) speak to you today through this ancient text and give you life?! Amen.

Hymn - [Riding out across the desert - YouTube](#)

Prayers

Spend a few moments in stillness, calling to mind your hopes and concerns for a new year. Offer to God as your gift whatever is on your heart, trusting that God holds your prayers in a gentle, healing light.

And remember too those alongside whom you journey;

- Those who might be inspired by our song of praise, or of compassion,
- All who struggle with fear, or lack of confidence,
- those who have lost direction in life, and all who are searching for love, for purpose, or for new life this year....

We pray for the coming of God's Kingdom in the words Jesus gave his friends...

.....Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.

Amen.

Blessing

May the blessing of the God of new roads be with us,
Star- maker, Christ of light and life, Spirit of adventure,
Today and every day! **Amen.**