



The off'rings of the Eastern kings of old. Unto our Lord were incense, myrrh and gold;

Incense because a God; gold as a king; and myrrh as to a dying man they bring.

Instead of incense (Blessed Lord) if we Can send a sigh or fervent prayer to thee, Instead of myrrh if we can but provide Tears that from penitential eyes do slide, And though we have no gold, if for our part, We can present thee with a broken heart Thou wilt accept: and say those Eastern kings Did not present thee with more precious things.

(seventeenth century priest Nathaniel Wanley 1634-1680)

The gift of 'Christian Unity'.

How do you feel about January? Do you see it as the month of post-Christmas gloom with a financial reckoning for seasonal overspending? Or as great opportunity for a new start – with new habits and new resolutions to make a better and/or slimmer you?

In so many ways, for Christians, January is a continuation rather than a new start

because the church's year begins in Advent as a time of preparation for the celebration of Christ's birth at Christmas. That celebration stretches right through to January's first great feast: the "Epiphany" or revelation of Jesus symbolically to the wise men – and through them to all of us.

Epiphany is followed by a celebration of more recent origin,

as the Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity begins on 18th January. This is a time when Christians across the globe focus on what unites us as sisters and brothers in Christ, and to reflect on how we all respond to that Epiphany, or revelation. Each year, a different part of the Christian world has a hand in the design of the Octave and for 2019, the churches in Indonesia have taken that lead. As a minority in a very large and quickly developing country, they have chosen "Only Justice" – judicial, economic and within society – as their theme.

In the Mease Valley, we will again mark the Octave with parishioners of the benefice praying alongside our Catholic friends in Haunton and the parish of All Saints in Lullington. We plan a joy filled celebration of our unity on Sunday 20th January 2019 at the church of St Michael and St James in Haunton. **This will be the only church service across the Valley on that Sunday morning.**

We'll begin it with a shared breakfast at 9.30am at Haunton Parish Hall followed by the service in Haunton church at 10.15am. We plan to prepare for the Octave with a short service of reflection at 2.00pm on Wednesday 16th January, also at Haunton Parish Hall. You'll find further details of these celebrations in the services list and on our websites.

Please put these dates in your diaries. If you haven't been to a church service for a while, this is a great opportunity to join with what we hope will be a large number of Christians worshipping in a format slightly unfamiliar to all of them. The service will focus on the chosen theme of "Only Justice".

This is our opportunity to demonstrate how the churches across the Mease Valley are connected locally, near and far within worldwide Christianity.

Revd. John Grice (Clifton Campville) Anthony Mason (Edingale)