

- *Early evening Christmas Eve service*

"Follow that Star!" (1)

- How good is your sense of direction?
- How well do you know Dundee & Fintry in particular?
 - see if anyone can follow my directions!!

Route One

- *(A Fintry one to start with...)*
- Start at the end of the church path:
 - turn right, and then left at the circle
 - take the first turning on the left
 - then the first turning on the right
 - then follow that road till you are level with the third turning on the right - where are you?
 - *(the bus terminus at the top of Fintry Road!)*

Route Two

- Start at the end of the church path:
 - turn left and keep going till you get to the circle
 - turn left again and go to the second circle
 - turn right, and go on to just after the second circle
 - turn left and then immediately left
 - at the circle, take the fourth exit, and keep on to the traffic lights
 - turn right
 - at the next circle, turn left, and then first left
 - *(B&Q, just beside Kingsway Retail Park!)*

Route Three

- Start at the end of the church path:
 - turn right
 - follow the road past the first circle, then take the next turn on the right
 - follow this road round to the circle
 - now turn right and keep going till you get to another circle
 - turn left, and just after the circle, on the left, is your destination!
 - *(the church!!)*
- **Directions are important:**
 - I was reading recently that sat nav on your mobile is likely to be one of the **big things** of 2007!
 - the Magi, or Wise Men, only had a star and an insight into its significance to guide them
 - but prompted by that fairly basic information, they set off to find out more...
- And we'll think some more later about the wise men and their journey

"Follow that Star!" (2)

- So, what was it with these wise men?
 - probably nobles, with enough wealth to study the stars rather than needing to make a living during the day time!
 - their working assumption was that the stars revealed something of what was happening on earth
 - and God used this assumption to bring them from afar to Bethlehem:

Drawn by a king (v.2)

- For the wise men, a star such as they saw signified a king's birth:
 - only the arrival of royalty was heralded in such a manner
 - and it was certainly a king they were looking for when they pitched up in Jerusalem, asking at the palace!

- (much to Herod's upset - he being the current holder of the post, and a bit on the insecure side!!)

Drawn to a shepherd (v.6)

- But what they find is perhaps not quite what they were expecting!
 - their expectation does seem to have been for more than merely another human king...
 - those come and go with pretty predictable regularity!
 - these wise men come looking for something more
 - and the Jewish priests and experts make the key connection - the special king to be born amongst them is **the Christ, literally the anointed one**, the Messiah, a Saviour...
 - one who in the Old Testament book of Micah (which Matthew quotes here) is described as a "**shepherd of my people Israel**"
- Shepherds look after, protect, lead, save, guide
 - so these wise men have come looking for some kind of super-king, a marked out, anointed one - **and have found a king who saves...**

Drawn to worship (v.8)

- They are drawn to worship
 - this is there from the start - **see v.2**
 - but is really the end result of their journey
- They've come from afar, to find this unknown, special king... why?
 - to worship him
 - because he is the most important figure in all of history...
 - his birth marked by a star's appearing...
 - his role heralded in ancient prophecies...
- **All of this they find when they come to the infant Jesus, in Bethlehem**
- What draws us here tonight?
 - I doubt it was a star - didn't see any particularly bright overhead!
 - **tradition?**
 - **something to do before making sure the children are off to bed?**
 - **good memories of Christmas and church from the past?**
 - **a desire to connect with something of what Christmas is really all about?**
 - **there is good in each of those**
- There was more in the stable than a Christmas baby:
 - there was a **king**, as the wise men bear witness, a more-than king, a **Saviour king**, whose rule transcends earthly kingdom boundaries, and indeed stands over all time
 - **someone worth being drawn by - perhaps drawn back by**
 - will you be drawn to Jesus this Christmas? Even to the point of worshipping him?
 - perhaps this is a time for you to come back to a faith you've left behind in the past...
 - perhaps this is the first glimpse of the star for you, and you've got a choice - follow, and see where it leads - come to services, or around Christians, explore what it is that is drawing you...
 - perhaps your faith is clear (however strong or otherwise you feel it!) - are you still drawn to Jesus this Christmas, or merely to church?
- Whatever your situation, follow, respond, don't simply ignore the glimpse of God you've seen tonight