

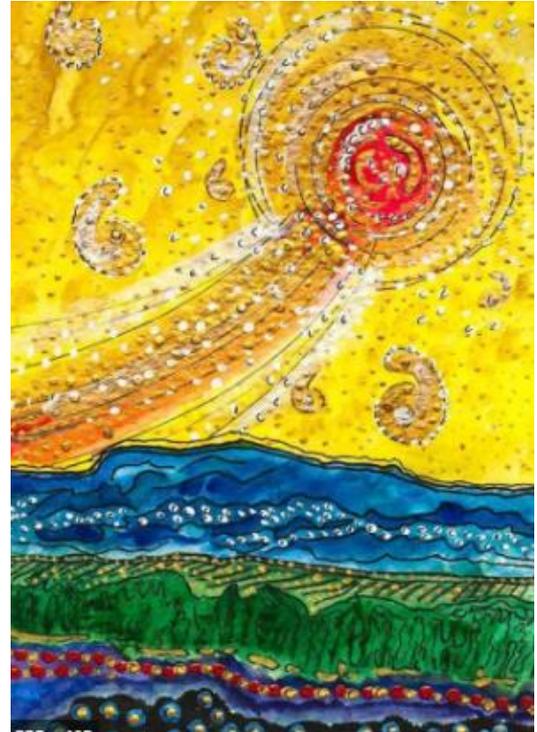
Christ Church Freemantle

Sunday 10th January – First Sunday of Epiphany

What a roller coaster of a week! It began on Saturday when Peter Greenland emailed to say they had Covid. Mild panic on my part dashing to church to consult my registers to see when we last saw them [Christmas Day] and then a very efficient phone call to Test and Trace England to see what I needed to do. Nothing, thank God, as our contact was too far distant. Fortunately Peter and Susan are somewhat better.

Then a delightful service led by Ian Coomber on Sunday with a sermon centring on the Magi going home by a different route. Twenty two in church with me eagle eyed at the back constantly evaluating that we were safe.

On Monday the builders returned after their Christmas break to finish the groundwork and almost complete the guttering and downpipes. Yet a further shock when I learnt that our Architect, Michael Weakley, was directing work from his hospital bed [Covid, of course]. Then to cap it all Mr. Johnson's statement in the evening and I was really getting the jitters as were the Church Council and our retired clergy.



Yet on Tuesday I felt slightly more positive and I opened up for private prayer on Wednesday morning. Six people came and we discussed where we were and how safe we felt. Then off to One Stop for essential supplies to learn that Sue, on the till, had learnt her daughter and son in law had succumbed to Covid. It was all getting too close to home. So, an email to the Church Council and retired clergy for their thoughts about closing. The Government had this time left it to our discretion as had the Diocese although they sent out a contradictory message. We were as one that it felt better to close the church and therefore the church building is now shut until further notice. I felt incredibly sad as we have managed to keep open safely since we were allowed to last June, which has been much appreciated by so many people. Yet I supported the decision wholeheartedly mainly because we just don't know how infectious this new strain of the virus is. Does the 2 metre rule remain effective even wearing masks? Does the 72 hour decontamination period remain sound and does our risk assessment thus hold water in the changed circumstances?

So here we are worshipping at a distance aided by the Thought for the Week and I think by some technological wizardry. That, of course will not reach everyone so it is vitally important to keep in contact with each other, just as we did during the previous lockdowns.

As Eileen so well put it in an email yesterday "The Magi returned home by a different route"

My love to you all and please stay safe.

Will Green