

Intercessions on Sunday 4 January 2026

by Andrew Goodman

Readings: Isaiah 60. 1-6; Matthew 2. 1-12

Collect: Creator of the heavens, who led the Magi by a star to worship the Christ-child: guide and sustain us, that we may find our journey's end in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Lord God, we have just celebrated the birth of your son Jesus Christ, who came to save the human race, not by domination or fear, but through love and self-giving. We thank you that he is with us as he calls us to participate with him in the work of righteousness and peace.

We know you are "on the side of the right, and not the right that justifies itself by might".¹

|Lord, help us to distinguish between what is of Christ and that which is anti-Christ. Help us to discern where false gospels designed to shore up political power are manifest, demanding loyalty and obedience, enforcing power through fear.

We recall that Jesus read these words of the Old Testament prophet Isaiah to the Nazareth synagogue congregation:

"The Spirit of the lord is upon me because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.

"He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free".²

¹ Bruce Cockburn: Gospel of Bondage; 1989

² Luke 4. 18

Help us to pray that the true gospel will prevail.

Lord, in your mercy - **hear our prayer**

Lord, we saw in 2025 a continuing reduction in world governments' financial contribution to foreign aid, often prioritising military spending instead.

We see conflicts driving up the number of people in need.

We see governments actively preventing humanitarian access.

We see the changing climate driving up inequality.

We thank you, Lord, for the contribution that charities and non-profit organisations, and community and faith groups make in the UK and around the world, but we see too the financial difficulties many of them are facing.

So Lord we look in this new year for light to break into the darkness, for manifestation of acts of kindness and courage, no matter how small, for collaboration, for generosity, that brings relief to those in need.

Lord, in your mercy - **hear our prayer**

Lord, we thank you that the incoming Archbishop of Canterbury, Bishop Sarah Mullaly, had the opportunity last week to highlight how churches can make a difference to communities, saying:

"The role of the Church should be a healing presence in our nation, bringing people together at times of often

intense division, caring deeply for those who need our help."

Bless her, Lord, as she prepares to become the Archbishop later this month and formally embarks on this leadership role.

Give wisdom to those with leadership responsibilities at St Andrew's: Alan, Bill & Scott; the Lay Readers and Leaders of Worship; Churchwardens; the PCC and their committees.

Lord, in your mercy - **hear our prayer**

Lord, as children and students return shortly to schools and other educational settings, we commit the children, students, staff and governors into your care.

Thank you, Lord, for the opportunities we have to be involved in local schools. Inspire Alan and Lindsey as they set up a lunchtime Big Questions Club with St Andrew's School's years 5 and 6. May the school's head teacher and staff return refreshed from the Christmas break. May they know your sustaining presence this term and be inspired to help each child reach their potential.

May the children be eager to learn, gain in confidence and be protected from any fear or anxiety.

Give parents peace of mind and protect families from the many pressures and concerns that can weigh us down.

Thank you, Lord, for the services that support children and families when extra help is needed. May funding and the

necessary skills always be available to meet the increasing demand.

As the psalmist says, Lord keep them from all harm, watch over their lives, watch over their coming and going both now and for evermore.³

Lord, in your mercy - **hear our prayer**

Lord, comfort all those who are suffering physically, mentally and emotionally. We commit to you those known to us who are unwell:

Restore to them the healing and joy of your salvation.

Lord, comfort all those mourning the loss of loved ones. We commit to you those known to us who have died recently:

Lord, we thank you for sending the Holy Spirit to comfort us and give us peace. Bring comfort and reassurance to those who mourn that you are with them in their pain and sorrow.

We remember the anniversaries of:

Lord, in your mercy - **hear our prayer**

Lord, as we journey into 2026, may we be sure of your guiding hand, and keep us in that certainty. May we travel with gratitude and joy along the level path where we are

³ Based on Psalm 121.7-8

led, and be thankful for the people we meet. May we be sure of your goodness to us, with our sins covered by the forgiving love of Christ crucified.

Merciful Father.....**accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen**