

A reflection for January

It's a new year. Maybe you're very glad to get the last year over with. Maybe you have lots to give thanks for in the year that's past. Perhaps you're looking forward to new opportunities and adventures in the year ahead. Perhaps you fear what may be coming. And all of these thoughts may apply to your life, to the lives of those you know and love, and to events across the whole world. For many of us, this is a time to reflect, and to choose the direction to try and follow in the days to come.

It's also a time when we remember the story of the stargazers from the east (the wise men, starwatchers, magi). They made a monumental decision to take a very new direction - following a sign they believed might lead them to a new king. They left their own culture and context, and found themselves embroiled in the political power plays of King Herod. They listened to advice and ancient words that took them to Bethlehem. And then they were willing to listen to a foreign God who spoke in a dream, sending them home a new way, changed.

These outsiders - strangers, foreigners, travellers - must have had a lot to reflect on from their journey. Migration and welcome. Dangerous politics. Different cultures. Ancient prophecies yet a new God. God in unexpected places. And a very different road. Nothing would ever be the same again.

What about us?

What risks are we willing to take to follow God's signs and find hope this year?

What mistakes will we risk making, opening ourselves to old and new voices, and trusting God will forgive us?

What changes will God make in our lives, if we are willing to listen and follow, wherever that takes us?

May God be with us all this year,