Sermon: **“We saw his star when it came up in the east, and we have come to worship him”** (Matthew 2.2)

The story of the wise men is one of those stories that the more you think about it the more uneasy you feel.

Magi – not necessarily three, not kings, but astrologers. The ‘star’ is a mystery and it moved in a non-scientific way.
The men seemed ignorant of what was truly going on, knocking on a palace door to see the new-born king. They were foreigners, with strange religion and customs. The gifts were all wrong – diapers & clothes would have been more useful. Imagine what would happen if news of the gifts reached petty thieves!

They were the cause of the need for Mary and Joseph to flee to Egypt and for the deaths of many children.

This looks all wrong and against God’s plan, yet…

[1] The story spoke to Israel

Matthew begins with a genealogy to show Jesus is David’s heir, followed by the names of the baby – Jesus, Immanuel (Matthew 1.21 & 23). Here the message is told to Israel, through foreigners, whereas Israel was expecting the good news to go *through* them *to* the gentiles.

NB violent reaction of Herod, and later many religious leaders (eg Mark 2.7, 16, 18, 24 & 14.55-65)

[2] The story spoke to Mary

The visit was unexpected, the gifts strange, the flight to Egypt unwanted.

The story told her that gentiles too could worship God (TEXT), the gifts were symbolic (as is bread and wine), the flight fulfils a prophecy, (Jesus generally did fulfil prophecy according to the early church).

Her world was upended but she remained loyal to her son & her God – she was an early disciple (Acts 1.14)

[3] The story speaks to us

Following Jesus can lead to opposition, even from those closest to us.

Do we connect with the gifts and their symbolic meaning (as bread/wine)?

Can we remain loyal no matter what, to him who is ever loyal to us?

Through the wise men God spoke to the world beyond Israel. We are inheritors of those magi.
How does God speak to us? If we do not hear God, we need to find a way to do so.
TEXT – ultimately this is what matters; do we copy?