**Candlemas: The Presentation of Christ in the Temple**

**Morning Prayer on the Fourth Sunday of Epiphany**

**A lit candle in the dark

Description automatically generated**

**Sunday 28th January 2024**

Join Zoom Meeting

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Meeting ID: 856 4943 0168

Passcode: 336782

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\* When passcode requested type numbers i.e. 336782 plus #.  
  
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Christ as a light, illumine and guide me;

Christ as a shield, overshadow and cover me.

Christ be under me, Christ be over me;

Christ be beside me on left hand and on right

Christ as a light, illumine and guide me;

Chris as a shield, overshadow and cover me.

Christ be before me, behind and about me;

Christ this day be within and around me.

Christ as a light guide me;

Christ as a shield cover me.

**Preparation**

*Welcome and Opening Prayer*

Candlemas is a festival full of Christian symbolism, full of tradition and church history. It marks a turning point in three ways – within the Church it is the moment we take a last look at Christmas and the baby Jesus, before turning to look at the cross; in the northern hemisphere it marks the turning from winter to spring; and it also marks the shift from darkness to light. It is called Candlemas because long ago churches would bless all the candles which would be used throughout the church year.

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Jesus is the light of the world. Come let us worship.

**Come, let us worship.**

Jesus is light in our lives. Come let us worship.

**Come, let us worship.**

Blessed are you, Lord God, King of the universe:

To you be glory and praise for ever!

For you are our light and our salvation,

and we your children wait for your loving kindness

in the midst of your temple.

In your Christ, born of the Virgin Mary,

there has sprung up a light for the righteous

and joyful gladness for those who are faithful.

Like Simeon and Anna, we welcome him with joy.

Fill us with your Spirit, we pray,

and make us into a living temple

to the praise and glory of your holy name.

**Confession**

Light reveals things that have been forgotten or lost or hidden. As we come into Jesus’s presence, his light reminds us of all the good things we have forgotten to do, and all the things we have hidden away. But if we say sorry, if we confess, we can walk in the light.

As we sit here, we remember all the times we have ignored people in need.

Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For all the times we have deliberately made wrong choices.

Christ, have mercy.

**Christ, have mercy.**

For the times we have forgotten your love.

Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

May the God of love

bring us back to himself,

forgive us our sins,

and assure us of his eternal love

in Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

Lord Jesus Christ,

Light of the World,

shine among us and within us;

turn us from darkness

and bring us to your eternal light,

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

**The Word of God**

*First reading:* *Malachi 3: 1-5*

“I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the Lord Almighty.

**2**But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner’s fire or a launderer’s soap. **3**He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the Lord will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, **4**and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the Lord, as in days gone by, as in former years.

**5**“So I will come to put you on trial. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud labourers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive the foreigners among you of justice, but do not fear me,” says the Lord Almighty.

This is the word of the Lord

*All* **Thanks be to** **God.**

*Psalm 24*

**Refrain:    The Lord of hosts: he is the King of glory.**

1    The earth is the Lord’s and all that fills it,

the compass of the world and all who dwell therein.

2    For he has founded it upon the seas

and set it firm upon the rivers of the deep.

**Refrain:    The Lord of hosts: he is the King of glory.**

3    ‘Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord,

or who can rise up in his holy place?’

4    ‘Those who have clean hands and a pure heart,

who have not lifted up their soul to an idol,

nor sworn an oath to a lie;

5    ‘They shall receive a blessing from the Lord,

a just reward from the God of their salvation.’

6    Such is the company of those who seek him,

of those who seek your face, O God of Jacob.

**Refrain:    The Lord of hosts: he is the King of glory.**

7    Lift up your heads, O gates;

be lifted up, you everlasting doors;

and the King of glory shall come in.

8    ‘Who is the King of glory?’

‘The Lord, strong and mighty,

the Lord who is mighty in battle.’

9    Lift up your heads, O gates;

be lifted up, you everlasting doors;

and the King of glory shall come in.

10  ‘Who is this King of glory?’

‘The Lord of hosts,

he is the King of glory.’

**Refrain:    The Lord of hosts: he is the King of glory.**

O Lord of hosts,

purify our hearts

that the King of glory may come in,

your Son, Jesus our redeemer.

*Second reading: Luke 2: 22-40*

**22**When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord **23**(as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord”), **24**and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: “a pair of doves or two young pigeons.”

**25**Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. **26**It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. **27**Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, **28**Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

**29**“Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,  
    you may now dismiss your servant in peace.  
**30**For my eyes have seen your salvation,  
**31**    which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:  
**32**a light for revelation to the Gentiles,  
    and the glory of your people Israel.”

**33**The child’s father and mother marvelled at what was said about him. **34**Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: “This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, **35**so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

**36**There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, **37**and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. **38**Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

**39**When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. **40**And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.

This is the word of the Lord

*All* **Thanks be to** **God.**

*We pause to reflect on the Bible passages.*

*Creed*

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,

source of all being and life,

the one for whom we exist?

**All**   **We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,

who took our human nature,

died for us and rose again?

**All**   **We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,

who gives life to the people of God

and makes Christ known in the world?

**All**   **We believe and trust in him.**

This is the faith of the Church.

**All**   **This is our faith.**

**We believe and trust in one God,**

**Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

**Amen.**

*Prayers*

We pray for people we know whose lives are dark at the moment because of illness, anxiety, loneliness or loss.

We pray for people whose lives are dark through suffering abuse or neglect or addiction.

We pray for people who feel that they don’t matter, who are not listened to because they too old or too young.

We pray for people whose lives are dark because of disappointment or failure.

We pray for people in areas of the world where there is war or natural disaster.

We pray that we may be lights in the dark corners. Help us, Lord, to accept and rejoice in your light in our lives.  
**Amen.**

Lord of the Church,

**Hear our prayer,**

**and make us one in heart and mind**

**to serve you with joy for ever.**

**Amen.**

*The Collect*

Lord Jesus Christ,

light of the nations and glory of Israel:

make your home among us,

and present us pure and holy

to your heavenly Father,

your God, and our God.

All   **Amen.**

*The Lord’s Prayer*

Uniting our prayers with the whole company of heaven,  
as our Saviour taught us, so we pray

***All* Our Father in heaven,**

**hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come, your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever.  
Amen.**

*The Conclusion*

**Nunc dimittis**

All   **A light to lighten the nations**

**and the glory of your people Israel.**

Now, Lord, you let your servant go in peace:

your word has been fulfilled.

All   **A light to lighten the nations**

**and the glory of your people Israel.**

My own eyes have seen the salvation

which you have prepared in the sight of every people.

All   **A light to lighten the nations**

**and the glory of your people Israel.**

A light to reveal you to the nations

and the glory of your people Israel.

All   **A light to lighten the nations**

**and the glory of your people Israel.**

Luke 2.29-32

Glory to the Father and to the Son

and to the Holy Spirit;

as it was in the beginning is now

and shall be for ever.

All   **Amen.**

All   **A light to lighten the nations**

**and the glory of your people Israel.**

***The Conclusion***

**We stand near the place of new birth.**

**Let us shine with the light of your love.**

**We turn from the crib to the cross.**

**Let us shine with the light of your love.**

**We go to carry his light.**

**Let us shine with the light of your love.**

**Thanks be to God.**

**Giving**

To give to the Exe Valley Mission Community by BACS, please use account number 54731690 and sort code 60-21-27. Please use the reference *EVMC services*.

To give to St Peter’s Church, please go to [www.stpeterstiverton.org.uk](http://www.stpeterstiverton.org.uk) and follow the donations link on the front page of the website.

Thank you for your support. It is very much appreciated.