

Dear friends

I hope you are all well. We will be continuing for the next few weeks with worship at home only, but I hope and pray that it won't be too long before, as a country, we are in a better position and can gather safely in person once again.

Our service today is for the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, otherwise known as Candlemas, and was filmed yesterday at Merevale.

<https://youtu.be/LrwzkjoZ6L4>



## Worship and Reflection for Candlemas

An act of worship for Candlemas (the Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple), filmed at the Church of Our Lady, Merevale, with a reflection on Luk...

[youtu.be](https://youtu.be/LrwzkjoZ6L4)

I am attaching the text of the worship and of Carole's sermon, as well as the newsletter. Please note that the Wednesday Zoom Bible study will be at the slightly earlier time of 6.30pm. The log in details for that are 319 891 1457, password Kings1. Compline on Tuesday is at 8pm, log in 999 516 9418, password Twigster3. Do join us, whether you've tried zoom before or not.

Finally, just on a personal note, I have been very grateful for the prayers of so many people over these last months and years for my family, and especially since Priscilla and Debbie's cancer diagnoses. I haven't been giving our regular updates, partly because their situation has been pretty stable and there has not been much new to stay. Broadly, that is still the case; Debbie had the results of her most recent MRI scan this week, with the encouraging news that the tumour does not appear to have grown significantly. Priscilla has been put on to a new treatment, but she seems to be coping well with that. They were both very pleased to have received the first of the covid vaccinations at Polesworth yesterday. So thank you all for your prayers, which are much appreciated and, I am sure, are making a very real difference.

With love and best wishes

John

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## Candlemas Service

### ***Welcome and Introduction***

#### ***Preparation***

Christ has brought us out of darkness:

**to live in his marvellous light.**

#### *A candle is lit*

Jesus Christ is the light of the world:

**Jesus is our Way.**

With Jesus even dark places are light;

**Jesus is the Truth.**

In Jesus we shall live for ever:

**Jesus is our life.**

### ***Hymn 'King of glory, King of Peace'***

#### ***Penitence***

*A bowl of water is blessed*

God our Father,

your gift of water brings life and freshness to the earth;

in baptism it is a sign of the washing away of our sins

and the gift of life eternal.

Bless this water, we pray:

renew the living spirit of your life within us,

that we may be free from sin

and filled with your saving health;

through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

#### *Sprinkling with water*

May almighty God cleanse us from sin

and make us worthy of the kingdom of his glory.

**Amen.**

#### ***Praise***

Glory to Christ, Son of Mary;

born a child,

you are one with us.

**Glory to God in the highest.**

Glory to Christ, Son of David,

born to rule,

you reign in our hearts.

**Glory to God in the highest.**

Glory to Christ, Son of man;  
born to save,  
you are the light of the world.  
**Glory to God in the highest.**

***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.  
**Amen.**

***Reading:*** Malachi 3.1-5

***Gospel reading:*** Luke 2.22-40

***Reflection***

I wonder what our hopes for the future are? I would like to suggest that for 99.9% of us, if not everyone, it would be to return to a way of life that we cherished and like to think of as 'normal', and with that return, we might then allow ourselves to think of our other hopes – a special holiday maybe, a grandchild or two perhaps, seeing friends and family prosper and succeed, even a world at peace might be an ultimate hope. There are plenty of 'hopes' out there, it just might seem like they are a little difficult to focus on at the moment.

We are living through very difficult times. It can seem as if there will be no end to lockdown, no end to home schooling our children, no end to people getting sick and dying as a result of the Covid virus, over 100,000 deaths to date just in this country alone. Will we ever be able to meet face to face again, kiss and hug, hold hands and all the everyday things that bring us comfort and joy. At times the future can look very bleak. But there will be a future, we will all be vaccinated at some point in the next 12 months against this deadly, mutating virus and we will once again be able to enjoy the company and companionship of others, we will once again dare to hope – it is just going to take a little longer than we first envisaged last March.

Hope was on the mind of Simeon in our Gospel story. He was looking forward to the consolation of Israel and the Holy Spirit had revealed to him that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. He was guided by the Holy Spirit to be at the Temple on the very day that Joseph and Mary brought the baby Jesus to the Temple to do for him what was customary under the law – to present him to the Lord. The Temple would have been bustling with people, many couples bringing their first born male babies for the same reasons of purification. We are led to believe that Simeon, a righteous and devout man, was probably the officiating priest on this particular day, but there would have been many other priests in the Temple at the time, so just as Simeon was guided by the Holy Spirit to be at the Temple door at the precise time of Mary and Joseph's entrance there, so the Holy Spirit guided him to know that the baby boy with them was indeed the longed-for Lord's Messiah. This is the child for which Simeon is in the Temple. He takes the child in his arms, and we are given the Song of Simeon, the Nunc Dimittis, often used at funerals and which we will hear later in this service. We are not told how old Simeon is, nor how quickly after this event he meets his maker.

There is another person in the Temple – Anna the prophetess – she is also waiting for the redemption of Israel. Waiting for the real king of the world. She is old and has been praying, worshipping and fasting in the Temple for a long time. Anna comes up to this family and gives thanks to God for the baby Jesus, then proceeds to tell everyone about this baby.

This baby is not like the king everyone was expecting the Messiah to be, nor is his kingdom the same as that of their current ruler, Caesar.

Both Simeon and Anna are living in a world of patient hope, where suffering has become a way of life. There are parallels with the world we find ourselves in today. And in the suffering endured by both the ancient and contemporary worlds there is also the same hope – the hope promised by God, that this Jesus was, and would grow up to be, and still is, the Saviour of the whole world.

Jesus represents the light to all peoples, Jesus is the light in a dark world for us now, and Jesus is the light of the future. As we struggle to see our way out of this pandemic, let us turn to the light of Christ who will illumine our pathway and walk alongside us on the journey.

Let me finish with a couple of verses from a hymn by Robert Willis, an Anglican priest and Dean of Canterbury Cathedral:

'In a world where people walk in darkness,  
Let us turn our faces to the light,  
To the light of God revealed in Jesus,  
To the Daystar scattering our night.  
*For the light is stronger than the darkness  
and the day will overcome the night,  
though the shadows linger all around us,  
let us turn our faces to the light.*  
Let us light a candle in the darkness,  
in the face of death a sign of life;  
a sign of hope where all seemed hopeless,  
as a sign of peace in place of strife.  
*For the light is stronger than the darkness  
and the day will overcome the night,  
though the shadows linger all around us,  
let us turn our faces to the light.'*

Amen

***Hymn 'Hail to the Lord who comes'***

***Intercessions***

***Hymn 'Like a candle flame***

***Blessing of candles***

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give thanks and praise.**

Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe.

You make our darkness to be light.  
For with you is the well of life  
and in your light shall we see light.

**Blessed be God for ever.**

Lord God, the springing source of everlasting light,  
pour into the hearts of your faithful people  
the brilliance of your eternal splendour;  
that we, who by these kindling flames  
light up this temple to your glory,  
may have the darkness of our souls dispelled,  
and so be counted worthy to stand before you  
in that eternal city where you live and reign,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

We wait for your loving kindness, O Lord,  
**in the midst of your temple.**  
Open to us the gates of righteousness,  
**that we may enter and give thanks to the Lord.**  
God is the Lord who has shown us light.  
**Let us offer in his dwelling  
an oblation with great gladness.**

***Nunc Dimittis***

***Final Responsory***

Father, we have sung your praise with shepherds and angels:  
may Christ be born in our hearts today.

**Praise to Christ our King.**

We have shared in the joy of Simeon and Anna;  
help us, like them, to trust your word.

**Praise to Christ our King.**

We have greeted Jesus, the light of the world;  
may we be filled with the light of your love.

**Praise to Christ our King.**

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.**