

*The Benefice of St Mary the Virgin,
Higham Ferrers with St John the Baptist,
Chelveston-cum-Caldecott*

The Season of Epiphany



The Feast of Candlemas

30th January 2022

Welcome to this Online Service



The season of **Epiphany** and therefore Christmas, comes to a close at Candlemas - the revealing of the baby Jesus as the light of the world by the visit of the Magi, is now brought into its fullest meaning as he is presented in the Temple at six weeks old and is recognised as the promised Messiah by the prophets Simeon and Anna. He is both the fulfilment of the Old Covenant and the beginning of the New – no longer just for one nation or peoples but for the whole world. The Feast of Candlemas then, celebrates this completion and yet at the same time, is an enlarging and opening up of our understanding of God’s purposes. As such, it is a Feast at which the whole church family gathers and people of all ages share together in lighting candles – always in a worship a sign and reminder of Jesus Christ, the Light of the World. Today, whilst we cannot hold candlelit processions in church, we can light lots of candles as we worship at home, as well as have a cross ready for the final part of the service where we turn towards Lent and the journey towards the cross, in which the power of God’s love is revealed to be stronger than death.

You might like to have ready a candle or two to light for the final part of the service today.

Many thanks to the many people taking part in this Online Festival Celebration, including Ruth & Ann Pack for the readings, and Zara Cunliffe, the Smith Family for the prayers and responsories.

Paul introduces the service

We sing together

Hymn



**Like a candle flame
Flickering small in our darkness
Uncreated light
Shines through infant eyes**

***God is with us, alleluia (Men)
God is with us, alleluia (Women)
Come to save us, alleluia (Men)
Come to save us (Women)
Alleluia! (All)***

**Stars and angels sing
Yet the earth sleeps in shadows
Can this tiny spark
Set a world on fire?**

**Yet his light shall shine
From our lives, Spirit blazing
As we touch the flame
Of his holy fire**

*Graham Kendrick
Copyright © 1988 Make Way Music,*

arranged by John Stainer (1840-1901)

The Greeting - Michelle

We meet in the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

The Lord of glory be with you.

The Lord bless you.



Introduction

Dear friends, forty days ago we celebrated the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now we recall the day on which he was presented in the Temple, when he was offered to the Father

and shown to his people.

In their old age Simeon and Anna recognized him as their Lord, as we today sing of his glory.

In this service, we celebrate both the joy of his birth as one of us and his giving his life for our salvation.

We look back to Christmas and forward to Easter

The Collect - Linda

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.**

Anthem – by the St Martin’s Singers

**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.***

**In a world where suffering of the helpless
casts a shadow all along the way,
let us bear the cross of Christ with gladness
and proclaim the dawning of the day.**

**Let us light a candle in the darkness,
in the face of death, a sign of life;
as a sign of hope where all seems hopeless,
as a sign of peace in place of strife.**

*Words: Robert Willis (b.1947)
Music: Richard Shephard (b.1949)*



Bible Reading – Luke 2: 22-40 – *read by Ruth & Ann Pack with Paul*

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, Mary and Joseph brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, ‘Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord’), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, ‘a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.’

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

‘Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.’

And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, ‘This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so

that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.’

There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband for seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him.

Hymn - Song of Simeon

**Faithful vigil ended,
watching, waiting cease;
Master, grant thy servant
his discharge in peace.**

**All thy Spirit promised,
all the Father willed;
now these eyes behold it
perfectly fulfilled.**

**This thy great deliverance
sets thy people free;
Christ, their light, uplifted
all the nations see.**

**Christ, thy people's glory!
Watching, doubting, cease:
grant to us thy servants
our discharge in peace**

Timothy Dudley-Smith (b. 1926)

Reflection – Paul



Music -

This little light of mine,
I'm gonna let it shine!
This little light of mine,
I'm gonna let it shine!
This little light of mine,
I'm gonna let it shine!
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!.....

Everywhere I go,
I'm gonna let it shine!
Jesus gave it to me...
Shine, shine, shine...

Words: based on a song by Harry Dixon Loes (1895-1965)
Music: American melody



Prayers - led by Zara Cunliffe

Let us pray to our Lord Jesus Christ who is our light and life.

Lord Jesus,
you are the light of the world.
May your Church continue to be radiant with your love
and be a beacon of hope
and a sign of your glory in all the world.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Lord Jesus,
you are the light of the world.
Guide our leaders and all in authority
and shine in the dark places where war and conflict,
greed and oppression
cause the darkness of hurt and injustice.

Lord in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Lord Jesus,
you are the light of the world.
Help us to bring the light of compassion and kindness
to those who are unwell or unhappy,
and we pray your healing and strength
for those who have asked for our prayers.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Lord Jesus,
you are the light of the world,
a light that not even the darkness of death can quench.
As we remember the more than 100,000 people
who have lost their lives in the pandemic,
comfort all who mourn and gather to your light
those who have now passed into glory with you for ever.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.



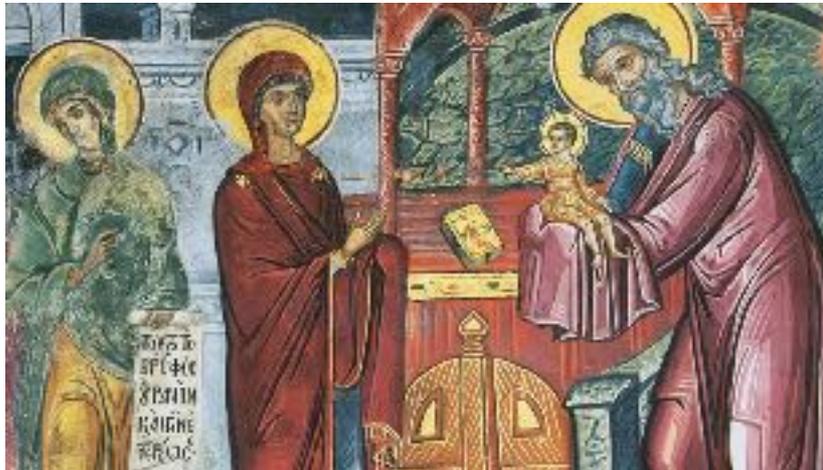
Lord Jesus,
we are your lights in the world.
Help us to be prepared to look for you and listen to you
so we can follow you in everything we do.
As we remember faithful Simeon and Anna,
give us grace to trust in your promises,
and patience to wait for their fulfilment;
We ask all these prayers, in your name,
Jesus Christ the light of the world.
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Believing the promises of God,
let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us;

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name;
Thy kingdom come;
Thy will be done;**

**On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
The power, and the glory,
For ever and ever.
Amen.**



The Peace - Linda

In the tender mercy of our God,
the dayspring from on high has broken upon us,
to give light to those who dwell in darkness
and the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Luke 1.78,79

The peace of the Lord be always with you
and also with you.

We offer each other peace.

Lighting of Candles – Michelle

We are invited to light candles at home as on this Feast of Candlemas, with this prayer:

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.



The Conclusion - Brenda

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.

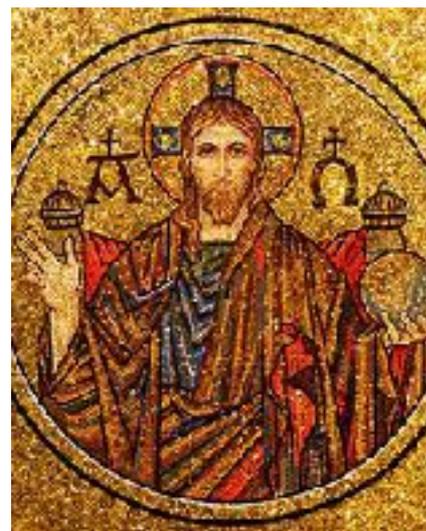
We go to carry his light.

Let us shine with the light of your love.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn

**Lord, the light of your love is
shining,
in the midst of the darkness
shining:
Jesus, Light of the world, shine
upon us;
set us free by the truth you now
bring us:
shine on me, shine on me.**



***Shine, Jesus, shine,
fill this land with the Father's glory;
blaze, Spirit, blaze,
set our hearts on fire.
Flow, river, flow,
flood the nations with grace and mercy;
send forth your word, Lord,
and let there be light!***

**Lord, I come to your awesome presence,
from the shadows into your radiance;
by the blood I may enter your brightness:
search me, try me, consume all my darkness:
shine on me, shine on me.**

**As we gaze on your kingly brightness
so our faces display your likeness,
ever changing from glory to glory:
mirrored here, may our lives tell your story:
shine on me, shine on me.**

Words & Music: Graham Kendrick (b.1950)

Blessing - Michelle

Christ, whose glory fills the skies,
fill you with radiance
and scatter the darkness from your path.

Amen.

Christ, the Sun of Righteousness,
gladden your eyes and warm your heart.

Amen.

Christ, the Dayspring from on high,
draw near to guide your feet into the way of peace.

Amen.

And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

Amen.



The Dismissal - Paul

Go in the light and peace of Christ.

Thanks be to God.

Music at the end: *Faithful Vigil Ended (from "Christmas Goes Baroque")*

*Faithful vigil ended,
watching, waiting cease;
Master, grant thy servant
his discharge in peace.*

*All thy Spirit promised,
all the Father willed;
now these eyes behold it
perfectly fulfilled.*

*This thy great deliverance
sets thy people free;
Christ, their light, uplifted
all the nations see.*

*Christ, thy people's glory!
Watching, doubting, cease:
grant to us thy servants
our discharge in peace*

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