

Sunday 31 January 2021

The Presentation of Christ in the Temple / Candlemas

Welcome to everyone today – wherever you are!

Although our church buildings are temporarily closed for public worship, the church is very much open! The decision to close was not an easy one to make but we want to protect everyone in our church family and help bring an end to the Coronavirus pandemic.

The Parish Eucharist is at 10am live on St Thomas' Facebook page.

You can also *dial in* to listen live, or later, using our new phone number

01706 599309.

There are also hymns and prayers to listen to and these will change from week to week.

The Collect

Almighty and ever-living God,
clothed in majesty,
whose beloved Son was this day presented in the Temple,
in substance of our flesh:
grant that we may be presented to you
with pure and clean hearts,
by your Son Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

First Reading *Malachi 3.1-5*

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them

like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

Then I will draw near to you for judgement; I will be swift to bear witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired workers in their wages, the widow, and the orphan, against those who thrust aside the alien, and do not fear me, says the Lord of hosts.

Gospel Reading Luke 2.22-40

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they 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. ³⁴Then 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 child³⁵ 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.

Prayer after Communion

Lord, you fulfilled the hope of Simeon and Anna,
who lived to welcome the Messiah:
may we, who have received these gifts beyond words,
prepare to meet Christ Jesus
when he comes to bring us to eternal life;
for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever.

The Week Ahead & Information

Today (and each Sunday)

Join us for coffee after the Sunday morning service, 10.45-11.15am on Zoom. You just need the email link to join in – if you've not received one please email Fr David (frdavidstephenson@gmail.com)

Monday - Saturday

9am Morning Prayer live on St Thomas' Facebook page
5pm Evening Prayer live on St James' Facebook page (not on Saturday)

Wednesday

12pm Lunch Deliveries see note below

Next Sunday (7 February – 2nd Sunday before Lent)

10am Eucharist from St James' live-streamed on St Thomas' Facebook page & dial-in
10.45am After church coffee on Zoom

Archbishops' Call to Prayer

In response to reaching the terrible milestone of 100,000 deaths from COVID-19, the Archbishops invite all to call on God in Prayer. Starting on 1 February we invite you to set aside time every evening to pray, particularly at 6pm each day. More than ever, this is a time when we need to love each other. Prayer is an expression of love. We will continue to offer prayers during Evening Prayer at 5pm each day online. You might like to use the following prayer as an addition to your daily offering.

Watch, O Lord, with those who wake, or watch, or weep tonight, and give your angels and saints charge over those who sleep. Tend your sick ones, O Lord Christ. Rest your weary ones. Bless your dying ones. Soothe your suffering ones. Pity your afflicted ones. Shield your joyous ones, and all for your love's sake. Amen.

Wednesday Lunches continued

The Wednesday Lockdown Lunches continue. If you, or anyone you know, would like to receive a hot, homemade lunch on a Wednesday, please book in with Fr Andrew by the previous Saturday. Absolutely **anyone** is eligible. No charge but donations of £5 welcome. Fr Andrew – andrewinhaslingden@gmail.com, 07460 899451

Please note that we are also able to provide frozen main meals to keep you going during the rest of the week, for families or individuals. Please let us know of anyone who might benefit from a delivery.

Lent

Ash Wednesday falls on 17 February this year. There will be a *Service of the Word* on St Thomas' Facebook page at 10am and a Sung Eucharist live on St James' Facebook at 5pm (instead of Evening Prayer).

Lent booklets, *Read, Mark and Learn*, based on the Gospel of Mark, are on order from the Diocese of Blackburn. If you would like one, please let Fr David or Fr Andrew know. We've ordered 160 to help us reach as many people as possible.

The Lent Course will be on Thursday afternoons, 2.30-3.30pm, on Zoom. Watch out next week for more information.

Prayers

Please let Fr David know of anyone who should be included on our weekly prayer list. (frdavidstephenson@gmail.com, 07539264279)

For your prayers

For our church communities and especially those who are isolated and feeling anxious at this time.

For all of the schools in our parishes: St John's, St James', Helmschore County Primary, Broadway Primary, Tor View, St Veronica's, Haslingden High

For the sick: Ian, Alan, Denzil, Edna, Charley, Rita, Dorothy, Jim, Matthew, Jean, Mary, Mother Enid, Judith, Julie, Mandy, Alexander, Emily

For all with coronavirus throughout the world, those who care for them, and those who work to vaccinate.

For all who have died in the past week and all whose anniversaries fall in the coming week. *Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord.*