

Sunday 1st February

– Candlemas



Morning Worship

Led by Sue Nelms, LLM

<https://zoom.us/j/82311473640>

Gathering and Greeting

The Lord of glory be with you.

The Lord bless you.

Opening Prayer

Lord, direct our thoughts, and teach us to pray.

Lift up our hearts to worship you in spirit and in truth,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Hymn – Like a Candle Flame

- 1 Like a candle flame,
flick'ring small in our darkness.
Uncreated light
shines through infant eyes.
Chorus: God is with us, alleluia,
God is with us, alleluia,
come to save us, alleluia,
come to save us,
alleluia!
- 2 Stars and angels sing,
yet the earth sleeps in shadows;
can this tiny spark
set a world on fire?
Chorus
- 3 Yet His light shall shine
from our lives, Spirit blazing,

as we touch the flame
of His holy fire.

Chorus

Graham Kendrick (born 1950)

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Saying Sorry to God

Hear the words of our Saviour Jesus Christ:

‘I am the light of the world.

Whoever follows me shall never walk in darkness
but shall have the light of life.’

Let us therefore bring our sins into his light
and confess them in penitence and faith.

cf John 8.12

**Father eternal, giver of light and grace,
we have sinned against you and against our neighbour,
in what we have thought,
in what we have said and done,
through ignorance, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.**

**We have wounded your love,
and marred your image in us.**

**We are sorry and ashamed,
and repent of all our sins.**

**For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us,**

**forgive us all that is past;
and lead us out from darkness
to walk as children of light.**

Amen.

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent,
have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,

and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Readings by Dona McCullagh

Hebrews 2:14-end

¹⁴ Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. ¹⁶ For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. ¹⁷ Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested. For the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Luke 2:22-40

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

²² 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 ²³ (as it is written in the law of the Lord, 'Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord'), ²⁴ 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.'

²⁵ 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. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷ 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, ²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

²⁹ 'Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; ³⁰ for my eyes have seen your salvation, ³¹ which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, ³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.'

³³ And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴ 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 ³⁵ so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed - and a sword will pierce your own soul too.'

³⁶ 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, ³⁷ 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. ³⁸ 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.

³⁹ When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰ The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Reflection by Rev Clare Coates

Prayer: Lord God, help us to live our lives devoted to You. Let your stillness and peace fill our hearts and minds and give us strength for today. Amen.

Many years ago we had a holiday home in the beautiful seaside village of Llangrannog in West Wales. It's named after the 6th century Saint called St Crannog, who devoted himself to prayer and studying scripture. He was a hermit who lived in a cave set in a wooded valley

where our house was later built, dating from the 16th century. Legend has it that Crannog released a dove from his cave and it flew down the valley. Where it first landed Crannog built a Church, believing this was a sign from God. A Church still stands at that site today – it's still open to the public and maintained by a charity. When we lived there our daughter Mary was baptised in the church! Many miraculous deeds were attributed to Saint Crannog and pilgrims came from far and wide to drink holy waters from Saint Mary's fountain which is located at the top end of the churchyard. From Llangrannog Crannog travelled the Celtic world, establishing religious communities in Somerset, Cornwall and Brittany. In common with other Welsh Saints, Crannog rejected his royal heritage. He was the son of King Ceredig, but rather than take up his earthly role as a Prince, he devoted his life to God.

Today's familiar Gospel reading is all about two individuals who had dedicated their entire lives to God: Simeon and Anna. Like Saint Crannog, they led quiet and simple lives devoted to God. Their lives show us that devotion to God is not a fleeting emotion, but a lifelong commitment of hearts and minds focused on God and following His ways. What can we learn from their example? Simeon was described as a “righteous and devout” (v25) man. He spent his life quietly worshipping God in the Temple. We're told that the Holy Spirit moved him and enabled him to recognise God was there in front of him as a baby. Mary and Joseph had brought baby Jesus to the Temple, one of many couples and families bringing their baby according to the law's customs. And yet Simeon knew straight away this baby was different. He realised this baby fulfilled all of God's promises of salvation for all people. Simeon's wonderful hymn of praise expresses this beautifully. He saw Jesus ‘the light of the world’ before him. It must have been a powerfully moving moment and an answer to all of Simeon's prayers. The culmination of many, many years of devotion and trust.

The Holy Spirit helps us to discern God's presence and activity in our lives too. Not necessarily in the great big things, but also in the smaller things we experience. The power of God is at work

everywhere. So like Simeon and Anna, let's be attentive to the inner movement of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit encourages us in our faith: to see with God's eyes. To respond to God's love in the way we treat others. The Holy Spirit helps us find that quietness and peace in the time we spend worshipping God.

Anna is a prophetess and an inspiring example of devotion in the face of hardship. We are told that she has been a widow for most of her life and with no one to help look after her. However, she channelled her suffering and sorrow into a life dedicated to prayer: “She never left the Temple but worshipped night and day” (v37). Her devotion was characterised by quiet perseverance and the daily rhythm of fasting and prayer. Yet like Simeon, when she saw baby Jesus that day, she recognised who he was immediately and “gave thanks to God.” (v38) She “told everyone” about her incredible experience (v38).

Simeon and Anna's lifelong devotion to God is inspiring and uplifting. Their stories speak of a spiritual journey we can all go on. They are good role models for us because they exemplify the importance of keeping going and never giving up. It's touching to see Simeon and Anna's faith and trust in God. They keep watch and pray for such a long time in the quietude of the Temple. They lived their lives in expectation, without discouragement or complaint. They persevered and trusted and allowed themselves to be guided by the Holy Spirit's promptings.

We too can be like these two elderly prophets, embracing and recognising Jesus as Lord of our lives. I love this simple story of quiet spiritual commitment and lifelong faith. There is something truly inspiring about their long lives of faithful devotion and dedication to God. We have all known and met people like them who have an abiding and quiet faith, and whose stillness and trust is a great encouragement to us all.

Nunc dimittis – Thomas Tallis

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace :
according to thy word.

For mine eyes have seen : thy salvation;

Which thou hast prepared : before the face of all people;

To be a light to lighten the Gentiles :

and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son : and to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be :

world without end. Amen.

Luke 2.29-32 (Public Domain)

Affirmation of Faith

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is,
seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and was made man.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.**

Prayers of intercession prepared by Sue Nelms

This morning I am including some prayers of intercession that have been prepared by Old Hills Malvern Churches.

Faithful God, we thank you for the example of Simeon and Anna, and their faithful service and witness, for their patient waiting for Christ to be revealed. Help us to serve you faithfully and patiently, watching for you to be revealed in our own lives.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

Holy God, as we remember the older and retired people in our churches, we give you thanks for all that they do in our Sunday worship, in our church fellowship and in our communities. Send your Holy Spirit to inspire them to use and share their life experiences with wisdom, humility, and gladness with others, especially the young and families.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

Creator God we thank you for the beautiful world you created for us to live in and pray that we will care for it respectfully. We pray for the

places that are having to deal with acts of nature that are beyond their control. We pray for people facing floods especially the people in Mozambique, people facing droughts especially the people of Sudan, stories which never reach our news but are happening regardless. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

Lord God, we pray for all who work for peace and unity, and for all world leaders that they will continue to seek for an end to the suffering caused by war and violence, injustice and inequality, disease and prejudice, poverty and hopelessness and bring healing to the world. We pray especially for those fighting terrorism throughout the world, for peace in Ukraine and ongoing peace via the ceasefire in Gaza. Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

Father God, we pray for our Church communities, that each of us will make use of our individual talents enabling each church group to flourish as a witness to the “One Body” of the church in a time of change and transformation. Help us to spread the warmth of your love to everyone we meet. Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

Gracious God, we pray for the work and service of all care homes, day centres for elderly and sick people, and for carers, whether paid or unpaid. We pray for medical services, our surgery, Addenbrookes Hospital, the Arthur Rank hospice and the Milton children’s hospice. We pray for all finding their life painful, lonely, or uncertain, especially those who are ill or vulnerable. Help them to sense your comfort in times of need and bless their families and carers. Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

Merciful Lord, your love reaches beyond the grave. At the end of our days on earth be with us and with those we love. May those who have gone before us rest in your eternal peace. We remember before you those who have died and we pray for all whose life is saddened by the

death of a loved one, be with them in their loneliness. May they rest in peace and rise to you in glory.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

Everlasting God, we pray for ourselves; as we go from this church today to start the week ahead, we ask that in all we do, we may we walk more closely with you at our side safe in the knowledge that your fatherly love and care knows no bounds.

Merciful Father, **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

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**

Believing the promises of God,
as our Saviour taught us, so we pray:

**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 forever. Amen.**

Hymn – Faithful vigil ended

- 1 Faithful vigil ended,
watching, waiting cease;
Master, grant thy servant
his discharge in peace.
- 2 All thy Spirit promised,
all the Father willed,
now these eyes behold it
perfectly fulfilled.
- 3 This thy great deliverance
sets thy people free;
Christ their light uplifted
all the nations see.
- 4 Christ, thy people's glory!
watching, doubting cease:
grant to us thy servants
our discharge in peace.

Timothy Dudley-Smith (1926 - 2024) from Luke 2 vs 29-32

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Notices

Conclusion

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

Amen.

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

Amen.

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

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

Go in the light and peace of Christ.
In the name of Christ. Amen.