

St Mary's Parish Church, Ross-on-Wye

In His Temple Shall Appear

A Service for Candlemas

Sunday 1st February 2026, 6.00 pm



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Candlemas is the natural conclusion to, and climax of, the season of Christmas and Epiphany.

“Christmas, Epiphany and Candlemas are the three blessed beacons of the Christmas season. Each one in turn flashes God's brightness to a world in darkness. Each one in turn is greater in intensity and spreads its comforting ray further and further. Each one proclaims that God, Light of true Light, has come to live in our midst first to Jew, then to Gentile, and then to the universal Church. Now we no longer live in darkness of spirit.”

from a Catholic primer "In the Home" by Florence Berger (1951)

Candlemas is a feast rich in religious meaning, with several related themes running through it – presentation, purification, meeting, and light for the world. All of these are all reflected in our service tonight. We are at a turning point in the Christian year as our thoughts move away from the joy of Christmas and look ahead, to the penitential season of Lent and all that lies beyond. We do that especially in our final hymn.

As the service progresses, the ministers reflect the journey of Mary, Joseph and the child Jesus into the Temple, by traveling from west to east.

St Mary's Choir is delighted to be joined by the choir of Holy Trinity Church, Hereford, with their Director of Music, Ewan Murray. The two choirs will be singing Evensong together later in the year, at Holy Trinity Church, Hereford on Trinity Sunday (31st May).

St Mary's Choir sings **Choral Evensong** here, at 6 o'clock, on the second and fourth Sundays of the month. As “the shades lengthen, the busy world is hushed, the fever of life is over and our work is done,” Choral Evensong is the perfect end to the week. The form of service and its language are virtually unchanged since it was first created by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer in 1549. As with this evening's service, the music is drawn from the rich heritage of English Church music.

During the summer months the choir is *Out and About* singing evensong in other churches around our Deanery and beyond. You'll find the beginnings of that schedule at rossparishes.uk/evensong; we and the host churches welcome all to these services.

Cover image: The Presentation of Jesus at the Temple by Donato de' Bardi (early 15th Century)

INTROIT (choir at the west end)

O nata lux de lumine
Jesu redemptor saeculi
Dignare clemens supplicum
Laudes preces que sumere

*O Light born of Light,
Jesus, redeemer of the world,
with loving-kindness deigned to receive
suppliant praise and prayer.*

Qui carne quondam contegi
Dignatus es pro perditis
Nos membra confer effici
Tui beati corporis

*Thou who deigned to be clothed in flesh
for the sake of the lost,
grant us to be members
of thy blessed body.*

Text: Office Hymn for Laudes
on the Feast of the Transfiguration

Thomas Tallis (c1505-1585)

*As the ministers process to the east end of the nave, and the choir to the chancel,
please stand to join in the*

OPENING HYMN

Earth was waiting, spent and restless,
with a mingled hope and fear;
faithful men and women praying,
'Surely, Lord, the day is near;
the Desire of all the nations,
it is time he should appear.'

In his temple, long and patient,
Simeon waited, watched of old
for the Lord, his promised Saviour
to appear as had been told.
Then he came; the long awaited.
Life of ransom soon to unfold.

Then the Spirit of the highest
on a virgin meek came down,
and he burdened her with blessing,
and he pained her with renown;
for she bore the Lord's anointed,
for his cross and for his crown.

Earth for him had groaned and travailed
since the ages first began;
for in him was hid the secret
that through all the ages ran –
Son of Mary, Son of David,
Son of God, and Son of Man.

Words: Walter Chalmers Smith (1824-1928)
Verse 3: Mark Sanderson

PICARDY French carol melody, harmonised by
Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

Please remain standing

WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

Dear friends, six weeks ago we celebrated the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, as the forty days of the Christmas season draw to a close, today we celebrate the day when Christ was presented in the Temple, when the aged Simeon recognised him as the Lord, seeing his promised salvation as he gazed on the Light of the World and knowing this Child was the Light of Life for all people. In this service, we reflect on the great mystery of God's Light, shining out in Christ to redeem all creation; and God's glory revealed in Christ to draw all humanity together. We ask God's Light to guide us and sustain us through difficult times, we whom Jesus calls today to be lights in the world.

We recognise the glory that belongs to God as we pray:

All **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.**

Please sit

ANTHEM

We wait for thy loving kindness, O God: in the midst of thy temple: Alleluia.
O God, according to thy Name, so is the praise unto the world's end.
Thy right hand is full of righteousness: Alleluia.
We wait for thy loving kindness, O God: in the midst of thy temple.
O Lord send us now prosperity. Amen.

Please stand to sing the

HYMN

**Angels from the realms of glory,
wing your flight o'er all the earth;
ye who sang creation's story
now proclaim Messiah's birth:**

***Come and worship,
Christ, the new-born King
come and worship, worship
Christ, the new-born King.***

**Saints before the altar bending,
watching long in hope and fear,
suddenly the Lord, descending,
in his temple shall appear:**

Come and worship...

**Though an infant now we view him,
he shall fill his Father's throne,
gather all the nations to him;
every knee shall then bow down:**

Come and worship...

Words: James Montgomery (1771-1854)
From *Iris* (1861) and *The Christmas Box* (1825)

Tune IRIS, French trad. harmonised by
Martin Shaw (1875-1958)

Please sit for the

FIRST READING

Luke 2. 22-28 – Jesus is brought to the Temple

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought [Jesus] 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 turtledoves 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:

[no closing response]

Please remain seated

NUNC DIMITTIS

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 (Book of Common Prayer 1662)

Herbert Murrill (1909 - 1952)

SECOND READING

Luke 2. 33-35 – Simeon gives his blessing

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."

Thanks be to God

Please stand.

HYMN

**New light has dawned, the Son of God is here,
a holy light no earthly light outshines;
the light has dawned, the light that casts out fear,
the light that evil dreads and love defines.**

**The light of glory shines to angels' song,
the shepherds run to where a baby lies;
a servant of the Lord, who waited long,
acclaims the light to lighten Gentile eyes.**

**And priestly men sit listening to a boy,
they see the dawning light within his face.
Such words they hear those Christ-child lips employ!
Amazing words of wisdom, truth and grace.**

**O Christ, the light who came to us on earth,
shine through the shadow cast by human sin;
renew the faith you gave at our new birth,
destroy the dark, and let your light come in.**

Words: Paul Wigmore (b1925)

Tune: WOODLANDS
Walter Greatorex (1877-1949)

THIRD READING

Luke 2. 36-40 - The Holy Family departs

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. *Thanks be to God*

Remain seated for the anthem

EXPECTANS EXPECTAVI

This sanctuary of my soul,
unwitting I keep white and whole,
unlatched and lit, if thou should'st care
to enter or to tarry there.

With parted lips and outstretched hands,
and listening ears, thy servant stands.
Call thou early, call thou late,
to thy great service dedicate.
My soul, keep white and whole.

Words: Charles Hamilton Sorley (1895-1915)

Music: Charles Wood (1866-1926)

THE BLESSING OF THE CANDLES

FOURTH READING

from Sermones catholici by Aelfric, Abbot of Eynsham (c955 – c1010)

Be it known also to everyone that it is appointed in the custom of the church that on this day we should carry our lights to church, and let them be blessed there: and that we should go afterwards with that light among the houses of God, and sing the hymn which is appointed for that.

Though some people cannot sing, they can nevertheless bear the light in their hands; for on this day was the true Light, Christ, borne to the temple, who

redeemed us from darkness and will bring us to that eternal light, who lives and rules for ever without end. **Amen.**

We stand and hold up our unlit candles to be blessed.

Father in heaven,
we praise you for sending your Spirit into our hearts to teach us to pray.
Bless these candles (+)
and teach us to use them as an aid to sincere and devoted prayer.
As their light shines in our homes,
may your protection encircle us and those we love,
and may your light shine through us in all the world.
All **Amen.**

During the hymn that follows you are invited to come forward, light your candle from one of the candles at the front of the church, and place it on one of the tables.

HYMN

**Like a candle flame,
flickering small in our darkness,
uncreated light shines through infant eyes.**

God is with us, alleluia *(lower, then upper voices)*
come to save us, alleluia *(lower, then upper voices)*
Alleluia! *(All)*

**Stars and angels sing,
yet the earth sleeps in shadows;
can this tiny spark set a world on fire?**

God is with us ...

**Yet his light shall shine
from our lives, Spirit blazing,
as we touch the flame of his holy fire**

God is with us ...

Words: Graham Kendrick (b1950)

Tune Graham Kendrick (b1950)

Please sit for the

FIFTH READING

A Song for Simeon - TS Eliot (1888 - 1965)

Lord, the Roman hyacinths are blooming in bowls and
The winter sun creeps by the snow hills;
The stubborn season has made stand.
My life is light, waiting for the death wind,
Like a feather on the back of my hand.
Dust in sunlight and memory in corners
Wait for the wind that chills towards the dead land.

Grant us thy peace.
I have walked many years in this city,
Kept faith and fast, provided for the poor,
Have taken and given honour and ease.
There went never any rejected from my door.
Who shall remember my house, where shall live my children's children
When the time of sorrow is come?
They will take to the goat's path, and the fox's home,
Fleeing from the foreign faces and the foreign swords.

Before the time of cords and scourges and lamentation
Grant us thy peace.
Before the stations of the mountain of desolation,
Before the certain hour of maternal sorrow,
Now at this birth season of decease,
Let the Infant, the still unspeaking and unspoken Word,
Grant Israel's consolation
To one who has eighty years and no tomorrow.

According to thy word,
They shall praise Thee and suffer in every generation
With glory and derision,
Light upon light, mounting the saints' stair.
Not for me the martyrdom, the ecstasy of thought and prayer,
Not for me the ultimate vision.
Grant me thy peace.
(And a sword shall pierce thy heart,
Thine also).
I am tired with my own life and the lives of those after me,
I am dying in my own death and the deaths of those after me.
Let thy servant depart,
Having seen thy salvation.

ANTHEM

When to the Temple Mary went, and brought the Holy Child,
him did the aged Simeon see, as it had been revealed.
He took up Jesus in his arms and blessing God he said:
In peace I now depart, my Saviour having seen,
the Hope of Israel, the Light of men.

Help now thy servants, gracious Lord, that we may ever be,
as once the faithful Simeon was, rejoicing but in thee;
and when we must from earth departure take,
may gently fall asleep and with thee wake.

Words: translated from German by J Troutbeck

Music: Johannes Eccard (1553-1611)

SIXTH READING

Matthew 5:14-16 – The light of the world

‘You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

Thanks be to God.

Please stand for the

CANDLEMAS RESPONSORY

Minister: We wait for thy loving kindness, O Lord,
All: **in the midst of thy temple**

Minister: Open ye the gates of righteousness
All: **that we may enter and give thanks unto the Lord.**

Minister: God is the Lord who hath shown us light,
All: **Let us offer in his dwelling an oblation with great gladness.**

*Please remain standing for the final hymn,
during which a collection is taken, the minsters move to the to the sanctuary.*

HYMN

**When candles are lighted on Candlemas Day
the dark is behind us and spring's on the way.**

***A glory dawns in every dark place,
the light of Christ, the fullness of grace.***

**The old who have suffered and waited so long
see hope for the world as they welcome the young.**

***A glory dawns in every dark place,
the light of Christ, the fullness of grace.***

**The light is increasing and spring's in the air.
Look back with thanksgiving! Look forward with awe!**

***A glory dawns in every dark place,
the light of Christ, the fullness of grace.***

**For Mary will follow, with tears in her eyes,
her Saviour and Son to the foot of the cross.**

***A glory dawns in every dark place,
the light of Christ, the fullness of grace.***

**The candles invite us to praise and to pray
when Christmas greets Easter on Candlemas day.**

***A glory dawns in every dark place,
the light of Christ, the fullness of grace.***

Words: Elizabeth J Cosnett (1936-2024)

Music: LOURDES – French traditional melody

COLLECT AND BLESSING

Almighty Father, whose Son Jesus Christ was presented in the Temple
and acclaimed the light of the nations:
grant that in him we may be presented to you
and in the world may reflect his glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God now and for ever. **Amen.**

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy
Spirit, be amongst you and remain with you always. **Amen**

Sit for the

CLOSING ANTHEM

O thou the central orb of righteous love,
pure beam of the most high,
eternal light of this our wintry world,
Thy radiance bright awakes new joy in faith,
hope soars above, above.

Come, quickly come, and let thy glory shine,
gilding our darksome heaven with rays divine.
Thy saints with holy lustre round thee move,
as stars about thy throne, set in the height
of God's ordaining counsel,
as thy sight gives measured grace to each,
thy power to prove.

Let thy bright beams disperse the gloom of sin,
our nature all shall feel eternal day,
in fellowship with Thee,
transforming day to souls erewhile unclean,
now pure within. Amen.

Words: Henry Ramsden Bramley (1833-1917)

Music: Charles Wood (1866-1926)

Please stand as the ministers and choir leave.

Please take this service sheet away with if you wish.

We hope to see you again at St Mary's, or Holy Trinity Hereford soon.