

ST STEPHEN'S CHURCH, CANTERBURY

The Eucharist on the Feast of The Presentation of Christ in the Temple (Candlemas)



Welcome to our worship at St Stephen's today

The season of joyful celebration that began at Christmas and continued through the successive Sundays of Epiphany, ends with the Feast of the Presentation (Candlemas). The child who has been manifested to the magi at his birth is now recognized by Simeon and Anna, when he comes to be presented in the Temple according to the Law of Israel. He is both 'a light to lighten the Gentiles' and 'the glory of God's people Israel'. But the redemption he will bring must be won through suffering; the Incarnation is directed to the Passion; and Simeon's final words move our attention away from the celebration of Christmas and towards the mysteries of Easter.



An induction loop system for the hard of hearing is installed in our Church. Hearing aid users should adjust their aid to 'T'



Large print orders of service are available from the sidespersons. Please ask.



Toilet facilities are available in the Church Hall. Please ask a Sidesperson for directions.



This service is being live-streamed for those who are unable to join us in church; By attending this service, you are giving permission and acknowledging that you may briefly appear on this stream. If you have any queries or concerns about this, please speak to a churchwarden or member of the clergy before the service begins.

¶ *The Gathering*

At the entry of the ministers the vestry bell is rung and we STAND to sing the hymn

Of the Father's heart begotten

NEH 33, omit vv. 2, 3 & 6

The president says

In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

All **Amen.**

The Greeting

The president greets the people

The Lord be with you
and also with you.

All

Introduction

The president introduces the day's liturgy

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. As a sign of his coming among us, his mother was purified, as we now come to him for cleansing. In their old age Simeon and Anna recognized him as their Lord, as we today sing of his glory. In this eucharist, we celebrate both the joy of his coming and his searching judgement, looking back to the day of his birth and forward to the coming days of his passion.

Prayers of Penitence occur later in the service.

Gloria in Excelsis

The Gloria in excelsis is sung

All **Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.**

**Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.**

**For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.**

The Collect

We remain STANDING.

The president introduces a period of silent prayer with the words

Let us pray that we may know and share the light of Christ.

Silence is kept.

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.

All **Amen.**

We SIT.

¶ *The Liturgy of the Word*

Readings

Two readings from Scripture precede the Gospel reading.

At the end of each the reader says

This is the word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

We STAND to sing the gradual hymn

Sing how the age-long promise of a Saviour

NEH 156 (t.149ii)

Gospel Reading

This acclamation heralds the Gospel reading

Today the Lord is presented in the Temple
in substance of our mortal nature.

All **Alleluia.**

Today the Blessed Virgin comes
to be purified in accordance with the law.

All **Alleluia.**

Today old Simeon proclaims Christ
as the light of the nations and the glory of Israel.

All **Alleluia. Praise to Christ, the light of the world.**

When the Gospel is announced the reader says

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

All **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Luke 2.22-40

At the end

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

The Creed

All

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

Let us pray to the Father through Christ who is our light and life.

We SIT or KNEEL

Biddings may be given before the Prayers of Intercession, which are then said without interpolation.

Father, your Christ is acclaimed as the glory of Israel:
look in mercy on your Church, sharing his light.
Lord, have mercy.

All **Christ, have mercy.**

Father, your Christ in his temple brings judgement on the world:
look in mercy on the nations, who long for his justice.
Lord, have mercy.

All **Christ, have mercy.**

Father, your Christ, who was rich, for our sakes became poor:
look in mercy on the needy, suffering with him.
Lord, have mercy.

All **Christ, have mercy.**

Father, your Christ is the one in whom faithful servants find their peace:
look in mercy on the departed, that they may see your salvation.
Lord, have mercy.

All **Christ, have mercy.**

Father, your Christ is revealed as the one destined to be rejected:
look in mercy on us who now turn towards his passion.
Lord, have mercy.

All **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord God, you kept faith with Simeon and Anna,
and showed them the infant King.
Give us grace to put all our trust in your promises,
and the patience to wait for their fulfilment;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Prayers of Penitence

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

All

**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.

All

Amen.

¶ *The Liturgy of the Sacrament*

The Peace

We STAND

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

All The peace of the Lord be always with you

and also with you.

These words may be added

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

All may exchange a sign of peace.

Preparation of the Table

Taking of the Bread and Wine

We remain STANDING to sing the hymn

Hail to the Lord who comes

NEH 157

The table is prepared and bread and wine are placed upon it.

This prayer is said

Father, in Christ there has sprung up a light for the righteous;
accept the gifts we bring before you
and grant that Christ may shine in us
to the praise and glory of your name.

All **Amen.**

The president takes the bread and wine.

The Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord be with you
and also with you.

All

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

All

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give thanks and praise.

All

It is indeed right and good,
always and everywhere to give you thanks and praise
through Jesus Christ, who is one with you from all eternity.
For on this day he appeared in the Temple
in substance of our flesh
to come near to us in judgement.
He searches the hearts of all your people
and brings to light the image of your splendour.
Your servant Simeon acclaimed him as the light to lighten the nations
while Anna spoke of him to all who looked for your redemption.
Destined for the falling and rising of many,
he was lifted high upon the cross
and a sword of sorrow pierced his mother's heart
when by his sacrifice he made our peace with you.
And now we rejoice and glorify your name
that we, too, have seen your salvation
and join with angels and archangels
in their unending hymn of praise:

All

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Accept our praises, heavenly Father,
through your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ,
and as we follow his example and obey his command,
grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit
these gifts of bread and wine
may be to us his body and his blood;

who, in the same night that he was betrayed,
took bread and gave you thanks;
he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

All **To you be glory and praise for ever.**

In the same way, after supper
he took the cup and gave you thanks;
he gave it to them, saying:
Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of me.

All **To you be glory and praise for ever.**

Therefore, heavenly Father,
we remember his offering of himself
made once for all upon the cross;
we proclaim his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension;
we look for the coming of your kingdom,
and with this bread and this cup
we make the memorial of Christ your Son our Lord.

Great is the mystery of faith:

All **Christ has died:
Christ is risen:
Christ will come again.**

Accept through him, our great high priest,
this our sacrifice of thanks and praise,
and as we eat and drink these holy gifts
in the presence of your divine majesty,
renew us by your Spirit,
inspire us with your love
and unite us in the body of your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **To you be glory and praise for ever.**

Through him, and with him, and in him,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
with all who stand before you in earth and heaven,
we worship you, Father almighty,
in songs of everlasting praise:

All **Blessing and honour and glory and power
be yours for ever and ever.
Amen.**

We SIT or KNEEL

The Lord's Prayer

The Lord's Prayer is said

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

All **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 for ever.
Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

The president breaks the consecrated bread.

We break the bread of life,
and that life is the light of the world.

All **God here among us,
light in the midst of us,
bring us to light and life.**

The Agnus Dei is sung as the bread is broken.

All **Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.**

Giving of Communion

The president invites us to communion

God's holy gifts
for God's holy people.

All **Jesus Christ is holy,
Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.**

The president and people receive communion.

Authorized words of distribution are used and the communicant replies

Amen.

During the distribution, the choir sing a hymn and the anthem.

When to the temple Mary went

Music: JOHANNES ECCARD (1553–1611)

Words: translated from the German by
JOHN TROUTBECK (1832–1899)

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.

Candlemas Procession

We STAND to sing a hymn during which the candles are lit.

Christ be our light

LONGING for light, we wait in darkness.
Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people,
Light for the world to see.
Christ be our light!
Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

- 2 Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has power to save us.
Make us your living voice.
- 3 Longing for food, many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others,
Shared until all are fed.
- 4 Longing for shelter, many are homeless.
Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us your building, sheltering others,
Walls made of living stone.
- 5 Many the gifts, many the people,
Many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another,
Making your kingdom come.
Christ be our light!
Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

Prayer

As we hold our candles up, the president says

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.

All

Amen.

Nunc dimittis

The choir sing the Nunc dimittis during which the ministers go in procession to the font. As they process, we turn to face them.

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.

Final Responsory

The president says

Father, here we bring to an end our celebration
of the Saviour's birth.

All **Help us, in whom he has been born,
to live his life that has no end.**

Here we have offered the Church's sacrifice of praise.

All **Help us, who have received the bread of life,
to be thankful for your gift.**

Here we have rejoiced with faithful Simeon and Anna.

All **Help us, who have found the Lord in his temple,
to trust in your eternal promises.**

Here we have greeted the light of the world.

All **Help us, who bear these candles,
never to forsake the light of Christ.**

Here we stand near the place of baptism.

All **Help us, who are marked with the cross,
to share the Lord's death and resurrection.**

Here we turn from Christ's birth to his passion.

All **Help us, for whom Lent is near,
to enter deeply into the Easter mystery.**

Here we bless one another in your name.

All **Help us, who now go in peace,
to shine with your light in the world.
Thanks be to God. Amen.**

The ministers and people depart.

Do join us for refreshments and fellowship in the church hall after the service.

Cover image: The Presentation of Christ in the Temple, stained glass window in the south of the nave our church.

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