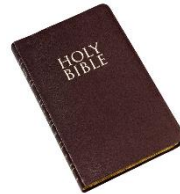




## EPIPHANY 4 – SUNDAY 31<sup>ST</sup> JANUARY 2021 CANDLEMAS

As we are unable to meet together in church, this service will give you an outline of a service you can do at home. If you have them, gather a few things that will help you create a sacred space – we suggest a cross, Bible and candle.



### INTRODUCTION

Hoping that you are all well, the vaccine rollout seems to be progressing well and gives us optimism for a brighter future. Bishop David is keen to get churches open in late February so we'll keep a keen eye on government and diocesan advice and let you know. We will have to have stricter health and safety within our service and after it, but I'm sure we will adhere to what is asked of us.

It has been good to get the reflections from Peter and Robin over the last three weeks, today Peter has written the reflection but we are celebrating the Presentation of Christ in the temple rather than the reading for today's theme which was Jesus' teaching and healing a man of his demons.

We had a PCC meeting and decided that although Jan is no longer in the vicarage we will leave the grub tub where it is. Joyce and I will have to keep checking that everything is ok at least twice a week. We also discussed if we could do more to keep in touch with internet or phone calls and as Jo asked last week, please let us know if you have any ideas or want to take us up on the suggestions given in last week's email.

Until then stay safe, keep in touch and we hope to see you soon.

Jan B

### PRAYER OF PREPARATION

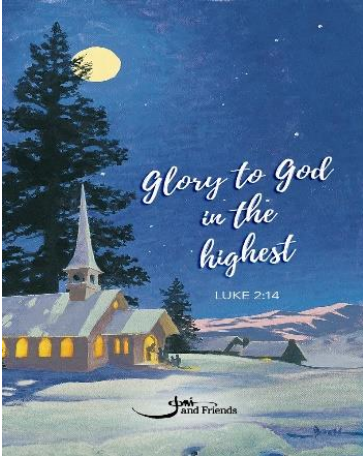
God is spirit – **Let us worship him in spirit and truth**

Give us the joy of your saving help – **and sustain us with your life-giving Spirit.**

## PRAYER OF PENITANCE

Almighty God our heavenly Father, we have sinned against you, through our own fault in thought, word and deed, and in what we have left undone. We are heartily sorry and repent of all our sins. For your Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, forgive us all that is past; and grant that we may serve you in newness of life to the glory of your name. Amen.

## GLORIA



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 upon 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

God of heaven, you send the gospel to the ends of the earth and your messengers to every nation: send your Holy Spirit to transform us by the good news of everlasting life in Jesus Christ our Lord.

## THE OLD TESTAMENT READING - DEUTERONOMY 18, 15-20

The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet. This is what you requested of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said: 'If I hear the voice of the LORD my God any more, or ever again see this great fire, I will die.' Then the LORD replied to me: 'They are right in what they have said. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their own people; I will put my words in the mouth of the prophet, who shall speak to them everything that I command. Anyone who does not heed the words that the prophet shall speak in my name, I myself will hold accountable. But any prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, or who presumes to speak in my name a word that I have not commanded the prophet to speak—that prophet shall die.'

This is the word of the Lord – **Thanks be to God**

## THE NEW TESTAMENT READING - REVELATIONS 12, 1-5

A great portent appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pangs, in the agony of giving birth. Then another portent appeared in heaven: a great red dragon, with

seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. Then the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bear a child, so that he might devour her child as soon as it was born. And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron. But her child was snatched away and taken to God and to his throne;  
This is the word of the Lord – **Thanks be to God**

## **THE GOSPEL** - LUKE 2,22-40

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke - **Glory to you O Lord.**



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. 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.

This is the Gospel of Christ – **Praise to you O Christ.**

## **REFLECTION**

Forty days after birth, Jesus is brought by his parents to the temple, as the Law required. The 40 days falls on Feb 2<sup>nd</sup>, traditionally known as Candlemas, but we remember and celebrate this event this Sunday.

Only Luke records the event, and the encounter with Simeon and Anna. For us, it is a bit of time-wrench as we have got used to the adult Jesus engaged in ministry, calling his disciples, changing water to wine, over the past few weeks, and now, we are back with Jesus, the infant, and with his parents around him. As with Christmas, we are back with a story where others speak about Jesus, rather than Jesus speaks, and those others are a couple of much older people, devout people who have been praying and hoping.

Simeon senses (somehow by God's Spirit) that this baby being brought to the temple, this baby which seems no different from any other baby brought by parents, is 'God's salvation', 'a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for the glory of God's people Israel'. And Anna also has this insight.

In this passage there is a wonderful mingling of the Law and God's Spirit. As Mary and Joseph do what is required by the Law, so Simeon is guided by God's Spirit to speak of Jesus. There are some who say that Jesus came to abolish the wretched Law which had trapped people in its tentacles, even going further to complain about the legalism of Judaism and Jews. This is just ignorant. Jesus came to fulfil the Law, and to speak against those who twisted it to their own ends or to exclude others. Luke presents Jesus as the child of devout Jewish parents who fulfil the Law in what it requires and in doing so God's Spirit enriches the moment in a most surprising way.

And Jesus will be found teaching in the synagogue, contending for the Temple to be a house of prayer; The Holy Spirit of God is on this prayerful man and woman who attend the Temple regularly, and will come upon the disciples at Pentecost in the city of Jerusalem, from where the gospel will

be shared to the ends of the earth. For Jesus is both the glory of God's people Israel AND a light for the revelation to the Gentiles.

At a time of Roman Occupation – a time of hardship and uncertainty, two prayerful old people are given a truth from God and they share it, they speak it, they make it known. In this multi-generational passage, we see the devout young parents being blessed by the older generation as both look forward to the (as yet unknown) ministry of this little child.

In our time of uncertainty and difficulty, whether we are younger or older, may we be prayerful, expectant on God; may we live through life such that we can pray, "Lord now let your servant depart in peace .." Simeon and Anna never saw the miracles or ministry of Jesus, not the crucifixion or the resurrection, but they had faith in God, and believed. They didn't seek glory or reward for themselves, and they never knew what impact their comments and blessing had on others. May we live our lives such that it might be said, he /she brought blessing to others.

Rev Canon Peter Reiss.

### **THE CREED**

**We believe in God the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son, who lives in our hearts through faith and fills us with love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us with the power from on high.**

**We believe in one God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen**



### **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**



During the intercessions, we pray for the church, our country, our government, people in difficulty and those who have died. You can use *your own prayers or if you prefer here are some on today's theme.*

Glorious God, you give us a glimpse of your glory in the face of Jesus Christ. Through him we are able to come to your presence and to rejoice in your love. Through him alone we are counted worthy to approach you. We give thanks and praise for the coming of Jesus into our world.  
Lord in your mercy – **Hear our prayer**

We remember in your presence all who have not heard the Good News. We pray for those who do not know anything of being healed or forgiven. We pray for all those who teach us about you and especially our ordained and lay ministry teams in our Turton Moorland churches. May we find joy, hope, peace and understanding from those who preach your word.  
Lord in your mercy – **Hear our prayer**

We pray for areas of our world where darkness seems to triumph over light. We remember people who are possessed by addiction or evil. Those who live in fear or seek help for peace in their lives. We ask you to bless them and all care and charity workers who are trying to help them.  
Lord in your mercy – **Hear our prayer**

We give you thanks and praise for all who have shared their faith with us, for our friends and families, for all who give us love and joy. We think of those families who are struggling with home schooling, with teachers who are trying to teach and create work at home. For those who are unable to work or worried about their outcomes.  
Lord in your mercy – **Hear our prayer**

We pray for all who have been ill for a long time, for those whose illness finds no cure. We pray for all who feel they are losing their faculties or mobility, all who cannot cope on their own. We remember those who work in Hospices and Hospitals. We especially remember in our prayers Rachel Greaves. (add any other names you know here).  
Lord in your mercy – **Hear our prayer**

We remember loved ones departed from us especially those whose anniversaries are at this time. We rejoice in the fellowship of St. Maxentius, St. Anne, St Peter and all your saints. We commend the whole of creation and ourselves to your unfailing love.

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

## The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be one, on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us this day 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**

## THE BLESSING

The Lord bless us and watch over us, the Lord make his face shine upon us and be gracious to us, the Lord look kindly on us and give us peace; and blessing of God almighty, the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore. Amen

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord – **In the name of Christ. Amen**

