

Sunday 28 January 2024

The Presentation of Christ in the Temple
Candlemas

If you have difficulty in standing please feel free to sit during any part of the service.

The priest welcomes the congregation and a time of silence follows for prayer.

When the organ starts the hymn, please stand to sing:

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.

Paul Wigmore (1925-2014)

Reproduced from *Ancient & Modern* Electronic Words Edition,
number 112

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

Amen

The Lord of glory be with you.

The Lord bless you.

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.

We remain standing while the choir sings the Gloria from Communion Service in E 'Collegium Regale' Darke

Remain standing for the Collect

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.

Amen

We sit for the readings.

A reading from the book of the prophet Malachi.

Malachi 3.1-5

Thus says the Lord God:

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.

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

Hebrews 2.14-18

Since the children share flesh and blood, Jesus 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, and free those who all their lives were
held in slavery by the fear of death. For it is clear that he
did not come to help angels, but the descendants of
Abraham.

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.
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.

Stand to sing the Gradual Hymn

Hail to the Lord who comes,
comes to his temple gate,
not with his angel host,
not in his kingly state :
no shouts proclaim him nigh,
no crowds his coming wait.

But borne upon the throne
of Mary's gentle breast,
watched by her duteous love,
in her fond arms at rest ;
thus to his Father's house
he comes, the heavenly guest.

There Joseph at her side
in reverent wonder stands ;
and, filled with holy joy,
old Simeon in his hands
takes up the promised child,
the glory of all lands.

O Light of all the earth,
thy children wait for thee :
come to thy temples here,
that we, from sin set free,
before thy Father's face
may all presented be.

John Ellerton (1826–1893) Reproduced from *Ancient & Modern*
Electronic Words Edition, number 110

*We remain standing and turn to face where the Gospel
is read in the centre of the church.*

All Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Choir This child is the light to enlighten the nations
and the glory of your people Israel.

All Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

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

Glory to you, O Lord.

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. 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 the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

The Sermon

Please sit after the short prayer.

We stand to say the Creed:

**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**

Please sit or kneel for prayers of intercession.

During the prayers:

Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

At the end:

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

Please stand for the Peace.

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.

The Peace of the Lord be always with you
and also with you.

We sing the Offertory Hymn.

No collection is taken during this service.

*There is a collection plate and contactless card machine near
the door or donations can be made online via our website
www.attleboroughchurch.org.uk/donate*

Of the Father's heart begotten
ere the world from chaos rose,
he is Alpha: from that Fountain,
all that is and hath been flows ;
he is Omega, of all things
yet to come the mystic Close,
evermore and evermore.

By his word was all created ;
he commanded and 'twas done ;
earth and sky and boundless ocean,
universe of three in one,
all that sees the moon's soft radiance,
all that breathes beneath the sun,
evermore and evermore.

He assumed this mortal body,
frail and feeble, doomed to die,
that the race from dust created
might not perish utterly,
which the dreadful Law had sentenced
in the depths of hell to lie,
evermore and evermore.

O how blest that wondrous birthday,
when the Maid the curse retrieved,
brought to birth mankind's salvation,
by the Holy Ghost conceived,
and the Babe, the world's Redeemer,
in her loving arms received,
evermore and evermore.

This is he, whom seer and sybil
sang in ages long gone by ;
this is he of old revealèd
in the page of prophecy ;
lo ! he comes, the promised Saviour ;
let the world his praises cry !
evermore and evermore.

Sing, ye heights of heaven, his praises ;
Angels and Archangels, sing !
wheresoe'er ye be, ye faithful,
let your joyous anthems ring,
every tongue his name confessing,
countless voices answering,
evermore and evermore.

Corde natus ex parentis

Aurelius Clemens Prudentius (348–c.413)

translated by Roby Furley Davis (1866–1937)

Reproduced from *Ancient & Modern Electronic Words Edition*,
number 80

Please remain standing.

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.

Amen

The Eucharistic Prayer:

The Lord be with you
and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give thanks and praise.

The president praises God for his mighty acts.

*The choir sings the Sanctus and Benedictus from
Communion Service in E 'Collegium Regale' Darke*

*The president recalls the Last Supper,
during which this response is used:*

Great is the mystery of faith:

Christ has died: Christ is risen:

Christ will come again.

*The prayer continues and leads into the doxology,
to which we all sing **Amen.***

Sit or kneel for The Lord's Prayer

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour
has taught us:

**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**

Breaking of the Bread

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

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

The president gives the invitation to Communion:

God's holy gifts for God's holy people.
**Jesus Christ is holy, Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.**

*If you normally receive Communion in any Church you are
welcome to receive at this service; come forward to the altar
rail now.*

*If you do not receive, you are welcome to come forward for a
blessing. Carry this booklet, or bow your head, to indicate that
you would prefer a blessing.*

*During the distribution the Agnus Dei is sung and the choir
sings the anthem:*

When to the temple Mary went *Eccard*

Prayers 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. **Amen**

**We thank you Lord, that you have fed us
in this sacrament, united us with Christ,
and given us a foretaste of the heavenly banquet
prepared for all peoples. Amen**

The notices are given.

*We stand to sing the final hymn, during which candles will
be lit. Please share the light with those around you.*

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 kings have departed, the shepherds have gone,
the child and his parents are left on their own.

They go to the temple, obeying the law,
and offer two pigeons, the gift of the poor.

But Anna and Simeon recognise there
the Christ-child who came at the turn of the year.

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

They gaze at God's wonderful answer to prayer,
the joy of the Jews and the Gentiles' desire.

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

Elizabeth J. Cosnett (b. 1936) Reproduced from *Ancient & Modern*
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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. **Amen**

Father, we have sung your praise with shepherds
and angels:

may Christ be born in our hearts today.

Praise to Christ our light.

We have shared in the joy of Simeon and Anna;
help us, like them, to trust your word.

Praise to Christ our light.

We have greeted Jesus, the light of the world;
may we be filled with the light of your love.

Praise to Christ our light.

We stand near the place of new birth.

Let us shine with the light of your love.

We turn from the crib to the cross.

Let us shine with the light of your love.

We go to carry his light.

Let us shine with the light of your love.

Thanks be to God.

The Blessing:

Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus,
who was wounded for our sins,
that you may bear in your life the love and joy and peace
which are the marks of Jesus in his disciples;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen**

Go in the light and peace of Christ.

Thanks be to God.

Organ Voluntary:

Paean on 'Divinum Mysterium' Cook

Please stay for tea or coffee in the Church Hall after the service.

*Feel free to take this service sheet away with you
but please recycle it when no longer needed.*