



Worship at Home for Candlemas (the Presentation of Christ in the Temple)

We believe that wherever we worship God 'in Spirit and in truth', He will be present.

To worship in your household, choose a specific place - perhaps somewhere you can light a candle, and where you and those joining you can sit together undisturbed. Choose a time when you can be unhurried. Then read slowly through the service sheet, praying the prayers as you go. If you are with others, then one of you can take the lead and say the words in normal type, with the other(s) reading the lines in bold, or you could take it in turns to lead. If it is just you, then read it all yourself. Some people find it helps to read the prayers and responses aloud, even on their own.

The Collect, the Bible readings and the Reflection are provided separately. Short intercessions are included, but you may wish to use your own prayers, or some may be provided by your church.

At any point, you could pause to look at the 'pick n mix' activities, or do them later instead – whatever age you are! Hymns and songs are not included in the written version of this service. But these written words also accompany an audio version of this service which does include music. You can find each week's audio service via www.lordsbridge.org

Find what works for you and, as you worship, pray and learn at home, may God bless you and those others doing the same.

Introduction to our Candlemas Service

Welcome to a service for Candlemas for the Lordsbridge Team Churches in the villages west of Cambridge. It is our custom when a 5th Sunday occurs in any month, to hold one or two services that gather people from across our network of churches to celebrate our working together and our common identity in Christ. This Sunday is a 5th Sunday, so in addition to this print version of Worship at Home, there is a video version to accompany and a Zoom service. In each of these services, including this one, we will pray for the members and the witness of the churches and congregations of the Lordsbridge Team. And because this is a 5th Sunday and a feast day in the Church's calendar we have included a 'spiritual communion' for you to meditate on the act of the eucharist and what it represents.

This feast day of the church stands at the watershed between Christmas, 40 days behind us, and the start of Lent just two and a half weeks ahead of us. Historically it was the time when household candles



were blessed. It is also, in the Celtic calendar, the moment when winter ends and spring begins.

In our worship at Candlemas, we hear of Jesus as a young baby brought to the Temple and of Simeon and Anna's profound recognition of Him with the words: "my eyes have seen your salvation... a light to bring revelation".

This service therefore weaves together themes of waiting and longing, of sight and seeing, of light and revelation, of hope and salvation, of the Christ of the manger and the Christ of the cross.

Gathering to worship God

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen
The Lord of Glory be with you.

Opening words

God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God

All: We bless you

Object of the Magi's search, subject of an old man's song, fulfilment of the Baptist's preaching

All: We bless you

Mary's son, Joseph's son, God's only son.

All: We bless you

Words of confession and forgiveness

The LORD is my light and my salvation – whom shall I fear?

All: The LORD is the stronghold of my life – of whom shall I be afraid?

Hear our voice when we call, LORD; be merciful to us and answer us.

All: My heart says of you, 'Seek his face!' Your face, LORD, I will seek.

From Psalm 27

Pause here for a moment, acknowledge God's presence with you as you 'seek his face' and recognise your need for forgiveness.

Lord, forgive our unclean hands. Lord, have mercy

All: Lord, have mercy

Lord, forgive our impure hearts. Christ, have mercy

All: Christ, have mercy

Cleanse our hands in the waters of your grace; purify our hearts like silver and gold.

Lord, have mercy

From Malachi 3:2-3

All: Lord, have mercy



Words of Forgiveness

Hear now the words of Jesus for all who are truly sorry and seek to renew their lives:
“Your sins are forgiven. Be at peace: come and follow me.”

May the God of all healing and forgiveness
draw us to himself and cleanse us from all our sins,
that we may behold the glory of his Son,
the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Words of praise and affirmation

The LORD is my light and my salvation – whom shall I fear?

All: The LORD is the stronghold of my life – of whom shall I be afraid?

Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

All: Blessed be God for ever

The Church’s Prayer for the Presentation of Christ in the Temple (Candlemas)

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.

All: Amen

*Alternative Collects,
From Common Worship ©Archbishop’s Council 2013*

Reading and Responding to God’s Word

*The **Bible readings** and a **Reflection** on them for this Sunday are provided separately. Please pause here, read and ponder them now. You might also like to use the Pic ‘n’ Mix family activities or any other resources at this point.*

Affirming our faith

Let us declare our faith in God:

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

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

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

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

Prayers for others and ourselves

In our prayers on this Lordsbridge Sunday we will pray particularly for each other, for our common future together in the ordinary we have always known and in the new we have learned and shared over the last year and for the light of our witness through the many ways in which we can reveal Christ to others.

We pray for our villages, (all names on screen via map). For all who live and work in them. We thank you for those who are offering support to friends and neighbours and for those who continue in the keyworker roles that sustain our communities. We pray for those who are struggling, for those who are ill, for those who are home-schooling, and for those who feel trapped or isolated. May they see a source of light and hope.

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

We pray for our church communities and their work of worship, care and witness. (image of the candles and the final one being lit?) We thank you for those who have and continue to sustain our faith in challenging times. We thank you for those we have met online and offline during this last year. We thank you for the creativity that has enabled us to experiment and work with what is possible. We pray for the congregations that meet in the and around our village churches. We too for pray for school's work, wild church and forest church, hamper schemes, pastoral care ministry, and home groups. We pray for all that is currently paused, for all that is unnamed, and for all that is yet to be.

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

We pray for the nations. We pray for the ongoing fight against the Coronavirus Pandemic and for all governments and their health authorities that they take appropriate steps for the good of their people. We give thanks for the work of scientists and all the logistics to make and deliver vaccines. We remember this week the more than 100,000 who have died in the UK after contracting Covid -19, each known and loved by family and friends, each known and loved by God.

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

Finally we pray for ourselves; as we walk with you into the week ahead, may we have eyes to see like Simeon and Anna, may we use our imaginations to find the glory of God in the face of Christ, in the ordinary and the unexpected.

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

Making a 'spiritual communion'

Since ancient times there have been seasons when individuals or communities have not been able to receive the sacraments. The Book of Common Prayer instructs us that if we offer ourselves in penitence and faith, giving thanks for the redemption won by Christ crucified, we may truly 'eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ', although we cannot receive the sacrament



physically in ourselves.

The Church of which we are members is not defined by the walls of a building but by the Body of Christ of which we are members. In making our communion spiritually today, we are joining with Christians everywhere to be nourished by the one who tells us, 'I am the Bread of Life'.

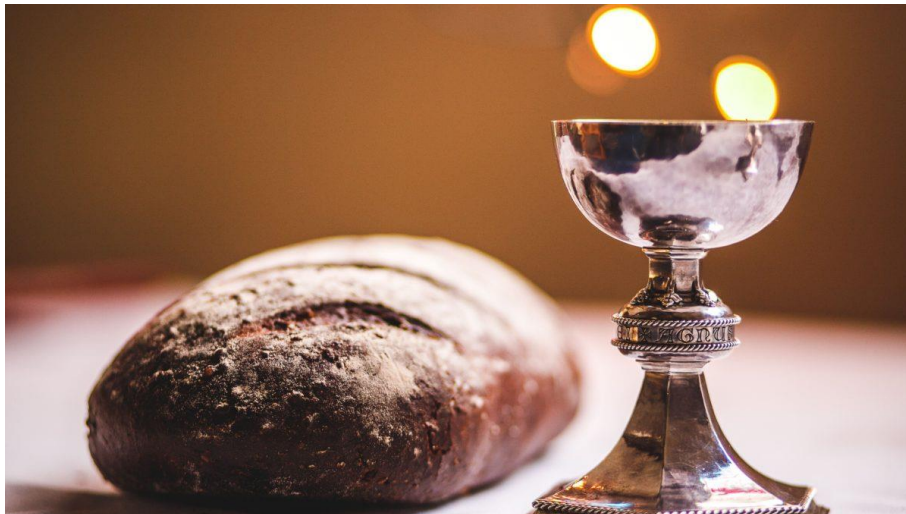
For Jesus said, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.' John 6.35

These are Simeon's words when he saw the baby Jesus:

- 1 Now, Lord, you let your servant go in peace:
your word has been fulfilled.
- 2 My own eyes have seen the salvation
which you have prepared in the sight of every people;
- 3 A light to reveal you to the nations
and the glory of your people Israel.

Luke 2.29-32

Pray for your own 'seeing', and give thanks for the light of salvation revealed in Jesus.



**All: Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ,
for all the benefits you have given me,
for all the pains and insults you have borne for me.
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally in bread and wine,
I ask you to come spiritually into my heart.
O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,
may I know you more clearly,
love you more dearly,
and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.**



The Lord's Prayer

**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.**

Closing words and blessing

A Candlemas service sometimes ends by looking outwards through the doors of the church or even candles outside, as we celebrate the light to lighten nations, with which we are sent into our communities. You might like to say this closing prayer either now or later standing on your doorstep looking out towards your community and beyond it.

May our communities be places of celebration and re-creation,
All: Joyful places to find the Lord.
May our communities be places of truth,
All: Safe places to be ourselves before God.
May our communities be places of love,
All: Trusting places, nurturing places, learning places.
May our communities be places of transformation and change,
All: Places to make us new, cleansing the doors of our perception.
May our communities be places of protest,
All: Places to challenge the world in which we live.
May our communities be places of intercession,
All: Thoughtful places, where others are lifted up to God.
May our communities be places of experiment
All: Places of risk, places where thought and activity meet.
May our communities be places of contemplation,
All: Places for vision, and a glimpse of God.

May the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with us all, and remain with us always. Amen

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord
All: In the name of Christ. Amen