

# St David's with St Michael's and All Angels, Mount Dinham, Exeter

## Newsletter for 31 January 2021 — The Presentation of Christ in the Temple otherwise known as Candlemas

Dear Friends,

Welcome to this Sunday of Candlemas. Please join us today for our online worship.

The link to our **Youtube service** is here: <https://youtu.be/RolP5LnWKWk>

You may wish to light a candle as part of this service. There is a blessing of lights with an opportunity to do this during my introduction. The service includes an address by Ash Leighton Plom. The prayers are lead by Bill Pattinson and first reading is by Robin Thomas. There is a special Candlemas hymn newly recorded by St David's virtual choir.

At 10.30am we will hold a **Zoom coffee** for 40 minutes including an opportunity to chat in groups. Please join us, if you can, for a catch up. The link to click is here: [Join Zoom Meeting](#)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6602261392?pwd=VzdOaU1XUFBjWk9jV0xvMDZWajZBQT09>

Meeting ID: 660 226 1392

Passcode: 196651

At 4pm **Thrive** will continue on Zoom with time for learning, discussion and prayer today on the theme of scripture, tradition and reason. Thrive is opening up our parish life to others and proving very enjoyable and rewarding so do give it a try! Please click here to join:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88685738289?pwd=WEh1dlNCY3NRQTlCcXFjK2ZlejR0UT09>

Meeting ID: 886 8573 8289

Passcode: 159821

### Church Opening Times for Private Prayer

**Thursdays:** 10.30 – 11.30am at St David's Church

**Sundays:** 9.30-10.30am at St David's Church  
11am-12noon at St Michael's Church (with exposition of the Blessed Sacrament from 11.30am)

### Covid-19 Safe for Private Prayer

These are the provisions we are making to keep you as safe as possible during Private Prayer.

Please avoid touching door handles.

Hand sanitizer must be used on entering and leaving church.

Please leave your name and contact details with Track and Trace.

We should wear face coverings in church. There are important exemptions which can be found at: <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-08/COVID%2019%20advice%20on%20face%20coverings%20v3.0.pdf>

and which include those with a hearing impairment.

Please take an 'I sat here' notice and leave it on your seat so that others who come later can sit elsewhere.

Please observe appropriate distancing from others at all times.

Toilet facilities will be available and please follow the instructions for use.

***Please do not attend church if you are feeling ill or are shielding. Although we will do all we can to make the church safe you attend at your own risk.***

### **Online Daily Prayers**

Monday 1 February, 8pm Compline (Night Prayer) on St David's Facebook Page

Tuesday 2 February, 9.30am Zoom Morning Prayer. You are welcome to join using the code below:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6602261392?pwd=VzdOaU1XUFBjWk9jV0xvMDZWajZBQT09>

Meeting ID: 660 226 1392

Passcode: 196651

Tuesday 2 February, 6pm Vespers on the Friends of St Michael's Facebook Page

Wednesday 3 February, 9.30am Prayer Book Mattins on the St Michael's Facebook Page

Thursday 4 February, 9.30am, Morning Prayer, on St David's Facebook Page

Friday 5 February, 9.30am, Morning Prayer, on St David's Facebook Page

### **Food for vulnerable community housed at the Great Western Hotel**

A big thank you for the help and donations that continue to arrive towards making our Tuesday packed suppers. A particular thank you to Mrs Helen Sail and the pupils of Exeter School for helping in recent weeks. The school agreed to support the Tuesday suppers as part of their charitable outreach this term and Mrs Sail has organised for two collecting boxes, one in the sixth form centre and the other in the library for food donations. In addition there was an unexpected and anonymous donation of £50 alongside the food collections. So thank you to our team of packed tea makers and all kind supporters. I spoke to a lady this week who is currently living at the Great Western Hotel, and she said how much the suppers are appreciated. The scheme is still set to continue until the end of March.

### **Traidcraft Stall & St Michael's Bountiful Table**

Unfortunately we are not able to run our regular stalls in church during the current lockdown but we hope to be able to keep them going through orders. Richard Featherstone is happy to take orders through his email address:

[r.w.featherstone@gmail.com](mailto:r.w.featherstone@gmail.com)

these will be available for collection from the vicarage porch or elsewhere. Richard is also able to supply catalogues giving a full range of Traidcraft items.

You can support St Michael's Virtual Bountiful Table by ordering baked goods from Elizabeth Hughes through her phone 01392 259878 or by Stephanie Aplin by email [stephaniecaplin@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:stephaniecaplin@yahoo.co.uk) These will be for collection, rather than delivery to church.

Thank you for your generosity in supporting these stalls.

### **Magazine**

The magazine for February is now available through our websites and there are some paper copies in our churches too. Thank you to our magnificent editorial team for producing another bumper edition - and to all our contributors.

### **Green Team**

Our parish 'Green Team' met this week. We will be including notes in the magazine and in this newsletter with suggestions about how we can contribute to the protection and enhancement of our natural environment. Please see my letter in the magazine about our request for birdboxes for St David's Churchyard. The first few should go up this week. You may also like to take part in the RSPB big garden birdwatch this weekend. This 'people powered' exercise plays an significant role in the monitoring of bird populations in the UK. Full details are available through the RSPB website.

### **A message from Belinda Speed-Andrews**

If you were able to read my magazine article back in December you will know that I am a Companion of the Nazareth Community based at St Martin-in-the Fields. The rule of life for the Nazareth Community is based on 7 areas; silence, scripture, sacrament, sharing, service, sabbath & staying with. I have begun to appreciate time spent in silence and please know that there are days when I don't do it but I keep returning to it and it is a blessing. And 'staying with' has kept me grounded and rooted in the light of Christ over the last year when there have been times, as I am sure there have been for many of us, when it was all we could do to put one foot in front of the other and sometimes not even wanting to do that.

Before I moved to Exeter nearly two years ago I used to travel to & from work in Exeter from North Devon on a full time basis. There were times when there were not many blessings to find in that journey but one blessing that I received every day was the ability to gradually leave behind the challenges of the day before I arrived home. Sitting in silence is a bit like that. We are able to sit with God and unwind in his peace, or begin the day in his peace which we can then carry through into our daily tasks.

With all of this in mind I would like to hold a short time of both contemplation and silence as a community. We do this at St David's at the beginning of advent, in particular for women. I would like to do something similar to this on a regular basis, perhaps once a month to begin with. Perhaps the early evening (6pm) for 30-40 minutes would be a good time where we can unwind and reflect on the day. Perhaps even a Friday evening where we can come together and reflect on our week? For now this will have to be on Zoom but my hope is we will be able to hold this as a hybrid time, both Zoom and face to face for those who can.

Please email me on [bspeedandrews@gmail.com](mailto:bspeedandrews@gmail.com) if this is something that you are interested in and if you have any thoughts to offer.

### **The Treasures of Romania Pilgrimage 20-29 September 2021**

Bishop Martin and Elspeth Shaw invite you to join them on a journey into the landscape, history, spirituality and resilience of a nation. From the vibrancy of Bucharest, through rural Marmures' ancient villages; wooden churches; staying at an Orthodox Convent, we will move across the Carpathian Mountains to the famous World Heritage [UNESCO] Bucovina monastery churches. Via Moldavia, We will come to the mysterious culture of Transylvania, staying at the historic mansion of Szekerland. Our journey will be completed by a visit to a Children's Hospice, cared for by an Orthodox priest. This journey is a pilgrimage into the heart of the Orthodox tradition.

We'll have a daily Eucharist and time to enjoy new as well as deepen friendship.

Cost: £1695 [which includes a deposit of £200]

If you are interested to receive more information and a booking form, please get in touch with Bishop Martin:

07801 549615 or [amartinshaw@gmail.com](mailto:amartinshaw@gmail.com)

The Pilgrimage company is: Worldwide Christian Travel, 36, Coldharbour Road, Bristol BS6 7NA. [Email: info@christian-travel.com](mailto:info@christian-travel.com) Website:

[www.christian-travel.com](http://www.christian-travel.com)

## **Phone Networks & local Walks with a Friend**

Many of you have appreciated phone calls from other members of the church community. If you would like to be phoned by someone and haven't had any contact, or would just like to talk, please let me know at [nigel.guthrie1@gmail.com](mailto:nigel.guthrie1@gmail.com) or by ringing me on 01392 660226 or Ash on 07855305519. At our recent PCC it was suggested that there might be church members who would appreciate going for a local walk with someone else from church. If you would like a hand organising that for yourself or for someone else please have a word with one of the clergy (as above) or with Howard Friend (07733739453).

## **Your Prayers are asked for...**

Please remember:

Gillian Harbord who died in the past week. Gillian was a much loved member of St David's congregation as well as a Quaker. Our thought and prayers are with the family in their time of loss.

Alan Roberts who lived in this parish for many years and whose funeral is on Wednesday.

Luke and Sam, two local young men who have died recently.

In the **Parish Cycle of Prayer** please pray for the work of Samaritans especially in our own city and give thanks for the skill and dedication of their volunteers and staff.

## **A Prayer during Covid 19**

Loving God, at this time of crisis

when so many are suffering, we pray for our nation and our world.

Give our leaders wisdom, our Health Service strength, our people hope.

Lead us through these parched and difficult days to the fresh springs of joy and comfort that we find in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

## **Please also pray for:**

the equitable distribution of Covid-19 vaccines throughout the world;

people here, and around the world, suffering from Covid-19, and those who are feeling anxious, isolated or afraid;

our Government, local and national, in the difficult decisions they must make and implement, our police service, those carrying out the vaccination programme;

school, college and university staff delivering online and in person teaching;

those working in care homes and hospitals - giving thanks for their commitment and courage;

those who are facing unemployment or economic hardship;  
May God bless you and those you care for,  
Nigel Guthrie

### **Order of Service for the Sunday of Candlemas, 31 January**

Welcome to worship in the parish of St David and St Michael, Exeter on this Sunday of Candlemas, when we remember the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple at Jerusalem.

This celebration marks the end of the Christmas and Epiphany season. As Simeon and Anna receive the infant Jesus with great joy there is a sense of completion and peace. The longed for Saviour has come. And yet the old priest say ominous words to Mary 'a sword will pierce your own heart, too'. So this occasion often feels like a turning point when having celebrated the coming of God's light into the world, we look ahead to Lent and the suffering and darkness of the suffering and death of Jesus. But we know that we are an Easter people who live in the light of the resurrection and are called to carry that light into the world in acts of love and service and words of witness.

We cannot bless the candles together today as we often would in church but I would like to invite you to light a candle as part of this service to remember the commission we received at Baptism to be bearers of Christ's light. So after the short introduction, please light a candle if you have one and I will say the prayer of blessing of lights before continuing with our confession and collect.

### **Introduction**

Dear friends: forty days ago we celebrated the birth of Jesus. Now we remember 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 sing today of his glory. In this time of worship 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.

***Please light a candle if you can safely do so.***

Lord God, the springing source of everlasting light,  
pour into the hearts of your faithful people  
the brightness of your eternal splendour,  
that we, who by these flames light up this world to your glory,  
may also have the darkness of our souls dispelled,

and so be counted worthy to stand before you  
in that eternal temple where you live and reign,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

### **Prayers of Penitence**

Jesus says, 'I am the light of the world. He who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.' Let us then bring our sins into his light and confess them in penitence and in faith.

**Lord God, we have sinned against you;**

**We have done evil in your sight.**

**We are sorry and repent.**

**Have mercy upon us according to your love.**

**Wash away our wrongdoings**

**and cleanse us from our sins.**

**Renew a right spirit within us and restore to us the joy of your salvation,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

*The priest pronounces the absolution.*





### **Collect**

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.

### **First Reading – Hebrews 2: 14-18**

Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he 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.

### **Alleluia**

Alleluia. I will worship toward thy holy temple, and sing praises unto thy name.  
Alleluia.

### **Gospel Reading – 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 the Lord. Praise to you O Christ

### **Address from Ash Leighton Plom**

Have you ever seen those optical illusions, like the one that looks like a duck facing to the left, or a rabbit facing to the right?

People use them to show perceptions are easily mistaken.

As far as we know from that reading from Luke today, all that anyone else perceived when Mary and Joseph brought the infant Jesus to the temple was just a young couple presenting their baby in the way that 1<sup>st</sup> Century Jewish people probably did all the time. Some days, there might have been a queue of such families coming to fulfil this Old Testament law which Leviticus 12 sets out: “A woman who becomes pregnant and gives birth... is to bring to the priest... a year-old lamb for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or a dove... If she cannot afford a lamb, she is to bring two doves or two young pigeons”. From this, we know that Mary, Joseph, and Jesus were a poorer family, then – did you catch that they brought two pigeons, not a lamb? But that’s all most onlookers likely saw: an ordinary family, fulfilling the Law.

But unlike these other onlookers, Simeon and Anna, two older people, saw what was really going on. Where everyone else just saw a typical poor couple with a baby, Simeon and Anna recognised the baby as God incarnate.

So, today, let's look at Simeon and Anna for a moment. Firstly, they, not the temple priests or the teachers of religion, are the models for us in this incident as Luke records it. *They're* the ones who recognise Jesus, and they're the ones who testify about him to others. There would have been priests and religious scholars right there in the temple courts, but it's Simeon and Anna who noticed Jesus, and who immediately set about telling others about him, too.

This pattern, of ordinary faithful people recognising the Lord and sharing him with others, seems authentic to me. I've been reading about the spread of Christianity in the first few centuries, and a common theme there, too, is that most of the people who told their family, friends, colleagues, neighbours, and so on about Jesus were not priests or teachers of religion, but normal folk who knew the Lord and loved him so strongly they had to share him with those in their networks. So, the faith spread as it does today, through family, friendship, business, and similar networks, by people simply sharing what they've noticed God doing in and around them.

Some time in the last hundred or so years, a myth grew up in some circles which suggested that only 'professional' Christians, priests and other church leaders, were allowed to share the faith with words, while the majority of Christians were only allowed to express their faith through prayer, volunteering, and charitable giving. But this isn't a situation Simeon or Anna would applaud, and it hasn't been Christian practice for most of Church history.

The '*Talking Jesus*' research, published in 2015 by the Church of England and partner organisations, points out that just 1% of non-Christians even know a priest or a church leader, but many more know Christian friends, family, colleagues and neighbours. As with Simeon and Anna, and believers throughout history, the responsibility and joy of making Jesus known to others belongs to all of us.

But let's note that Simeon and Anna's readiness to recognise Christ and make him known didn't appear from nowhere. For example, I wonder if their understanding and insight into what God was doing when they saw Christ arose from the fact that their lives were deeply shaped by faithful prayer and worship? They knew God well enough that they recognised him when they met him incarnate, and they loved him so much that they had to tell about him to everyone around them.

So, let's end by exploring what the good news is we have to tell. On the one hand, Simeon and Anna are celebrating the incarnation. Aptly, the reading from Hebrews 2 was also about the mystery of the incarnation, for example where it says Jesus took on "flesh and blood" and "became like us". Although he existed as God before time began, amazingly he takes on real humanity and becomes really and truly like us.

But these readings also show we are on the move towards Easter. For example, Hebrews 2.14 points out that Christ took on our human nature, *so that* "through death" he might "expiate... the sins of the people" and free us from "the fear of death" by destroying "the power of death". "Expiation" is simply "the act of making amends" or reparation for guilt or wrongdoing, and so Christians have always understood Christ's death on Good Friday to be the atoning sacrifice the author has in mind here, in Christ making amends for our sins.

Our reading from Hebrews, then, reminds us of this crux of the good news we are to tell – that Jesus took on human flesh "*so that* through death" he might "make atonement for the sins of the people". As such, Simeon can say, "now let your servant depart in peace, according to your word, *for my eyes have seen your salvation*". Simeon is unafraid to die, in fact he is ready to depart "in peace", because he knows he has seen the coming of Christ, who brings salvation.

So, friends, this Candlemas, let's all seek to be perceptive like Simeon and Anna, so we *see* Christ where he is at work in and around us. Let's stay close enough to him, through prayer, online worship, and our own devotional study, that we don't mistake for a duck what is a rabbit, or vice versa, so we know God well enough to discern him the way Simeon and Anna do. And let's be active like Simeon and Anna in telling others about Christ's coming, about what he has done, and what he is doing today.

### **Time of Prayer for Candlemas, with Bill Pattinson**

If you have near you the candle you held up for Nigel to bless, and if you are able to, please light it now and hold it before you as we pray.

The response to the bidding, "Jesus, light of the world" is "**Shine in our darkness**".

Heavenly Father, we give thanks for the welcome given to the child, Jesus, by Simeon and Anna, seeing that in his life there would be joy, sorrow and suffering, and for the example they have set us.

As we remember and pray for the older and retired people, we thank you for the vaccination programme being rolled out in our country, giving a light and hope to all in this pandemic. We pray your Holy Spirit may inspire us all to use and share our experiences of life with wisdom, humility and gladness. We look forward to a time when we can hold and hug our sons, daughters and grandchildren again.

We pray for the work and service of all care homes and nursing homes for elderly and sick people and give thanks to God for all carers.

Jesus Light of the world, **shine in our darkness**

Heavenly Father, we pray that the world-wide church may always be ready to travel along your way and in your direction.

Bless and guide all ministers and leaders considering the best and most appropriate ways we can worship you offering fresh opportunities to be the body of Christ. May your Kingdom here on earth grow as never before.

Jesus Light of the World, **shine in our darkness**

Heavenly Father, we pray for peace, justice and truth in our troubled world. We pray for nations and leaders as they live through conflicts and struggle with the ways of controlling the spread of Covid 19, remembering especially our own government.

We remember those suffering because of recent floods and we pray for all those people working to bring aid and help where it is most needed.

Jesus light of the world, **shine in our darkness**

Heavenly Father, bring healing and wholeness to all those who are suffering at this time. To those who struggle with mental illness, with depression, stress, anxiety and thoughts of taking their own lives, bring your peace and strength. We pray for all those who work in mental health, giving thanks especially at this time for the work of the Samaritans, both here in Exeter and elsewhere.

Jesus light of the world, **shine in our darkness**

Heavenly Father, we pray at this time for all schools, colleges and universities - for all children and students working at home; for those parents trying to balance their

lives with home schooling; for all teachers preparing and delivering their lessons both in school and online.

We pray for all those in the NHS working under most demanding conditions and for all key workers; for those whose jobs and livelihoods are threatened by the lockdown restrictions; and for those who are ill in home, hospital or hospice remembering especially those on our Parish prayer list. Give them your light, Lord, in their needs  
Jesus light of the world, **shine in our darkness**

Heavenly Father, we pray for those who have died and those who miss and grieve for them.

Jesus Christ is the light of the world, a light which no darkness can quench. We light this candle as a symbol of your love and warmth and hope

You turn our darkness into light, in your light shall we see light.

Grant us and all who have known you in their hearts a share in your eternal kingdom.

Jesus Light of the world, **shine in our darkness**

Open our eyes, Father, to the light of your glory in the world you have made, in the people around us, and in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

### **Closing Prayer and Blessing**

Lord, you fulfilled the hope of Simeon and Anna,  
who lived to welcome the Messiah:

May we, who have received your gifts of grace,  
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.

Christ the Son of God, born of Mary, fill you with his  
grace to trust his promises and obey his will;  
and the blessing of God almighty, the Father,  
the Son and the Holy Spirit be upon us and remain  
with us always. **Amen.**

**Do join us next week for our services on Youtube and Facebook!**

Prebendary Nigel Guthrie  
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