



**COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION  
SUNDAY 2 FEBRUARY 2025 – Candlemas**

**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.

**Psalm 24, verses 1-10**

1 The earth is the Lord's and all that fills it, ♦  
the compass of the world and all who dwell therein.  
2 For he has founded it upon the seas ♦  
and set it firm upon the rivers of the deep.  
3 'Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord, ♦  
or who can rise up in his holy place?'  
4 'Those who have clean hands and a pure heart, ♦  
who have not lifted up their soul to an idol,  
nor sworn an oath to a lie;  
5 'They shall receive a blessing from the Lord, ♦  
a just reward from the God of their salvation.'  
6 Such is the company of those who seek him, ♦  
of those who seek your face, O God of Jacob.  
7 Lift up your heads, O gates;  
be lifted up, you everlasting doors; ♦  
and the King of glory shall come in.  
8 'Who is the King of glory?' ♦  
'The Lord, strong and mighty,  
the Lord who is mighty in battle.'  
9 Lift up your heads, O gates;  
be lifted up, you everlasting doors; ♦  
and the King of glory shall come in.  
10 'Who is this King of glory?' ♦  
'The Lord of hosts,  
he is the King of glory.'

**A reading from the letter to Hebrews, chapter 2, verses 14-18.**

**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.

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

***At Morning Prayer, the Gospel is simply the second reading, people sit to hear it and is introduced in the same way as the first:***

The second reading is from Luke, chapter 2, verses 22-40.

***and then at the end:***

For the word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God.**

***For Eucharists/ Communion people stand to hear the Gospel.***

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Luke, Chapter 2, verses 22-40.

**Glory to you, O Lord**

***And then at the end:***

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **Luke 2.22-40**

### **Jesus Is Presented in the Temple**

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.

### The Return to Nazareth

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.

## ***A Reflection from Hannah...***

This week saw the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. Such harrowing and moving stories of the worst and best of human capabilities. Stories like this form a culture- though most of us are far too young to have lived through WWII, we all live in its shadow still. The things that were learned, the things that we vowed would never happen again, the particular bits that get attention, all live in our bones. They are deep stories, that we share, and that we draw on to find a way in the present. They are part of who we are.

It works too at an individual level- the experiences we have as children live deep within us, and give us fuel for the journey as life unfolds. There are some amazing psychological studies into the influence of even the earliest moments in our lives. For example, there is research showing that premature babies, who have no conscious memory of being in an incubator, are much calmer in intensive care units as children than those who have never been to one before. We may not be able to recall an early moment, but that doesn't mean that it doesn't shape us or affect us. That's one reason why telling the stories of our faith in schools matters- because whether or not someone chooses to believe them, they become part of their make-up, their DNA. As one writer notes, Christianity is a *slow spirituality*- it feeds us ever more richly as the years go by, reminding us of what we once knew, reawakening those old, old memories.

As we come to Candlemas, in which we mark the end of Christmas and face the year ahead, we are gifted an insight into Jesus' fuel for the journey. That delightful and yet deeply unsteady encounter with Anna and Simeon in the temple both shows us something of what shaped him and his parents as the years unfolded, and gives us fuel for our journey too. We follow one who was under no illusions about the cross-shaped path his ministry would take. We follow one who, as our first reading reminds us, is in utter solidarity with us and can therefore help and comfort us in our struggles. The story of the presentation of Christ in the Temple is in our bones- may it be re-enlivened this Candlemas, as we turn to the world around us and ask that same question again- in the eternal light of Christ, how then, shall we live now?