



LICHFIELD
CATHEDRAL



Light of the Nations

**A Service of Readings and Music
for the Feast of the Presentation
of Christ in the Temple (Candlemas)**

Sunday 2nd February 2025 - 18:00

Lichfield Cathedral is called to live and proclaim the transforming love of God. Through the fullness of its life in the Spirit, it seeks to be a sign of the friendship and freedom that God in Jesus Christ has given the whole world to enjoy.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Welcome to Lichfield Cathedral. It is wonderful to have so many people in the Cathedral today, but for everyone's comfort and safety, please read and take note of the following information.

Safety

Please always follow any directions given in how we need to move around the Cathedral. In the unlikely event of an emergency, please remain quiet and respond calmly and promptly to the directions of the Vergers.

Posture

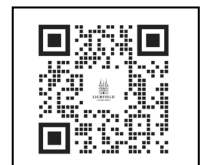
The order of service indicates whether to sit or stand, however please feel free to adopt the posture that you feel most comfortable with.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND LIVESTREAMING

Whilst we ask that members of the congregation do not take photographs or video of our worship, please note that at some of our services our Cathedral volunteer photographers will be taking photographs. We are also livestreaming to Facebook or YouTube many of our services. Please do let us know if this is a particular issue for you and we will assist by letting you know where you can sit so that you do not appear on screen.

Offerings

Your gifts are vital in sustaining our mission and worship. A collection will be taken by the Stewards during the offertory hymn. Please do Gift Aid your donation if you are a UK taxpayer by completing the required details on the envelopes provided. There are electronic giving points where you can tap a debit or credit card; if you need assistance with these devices, please do ask steward or verger. You can also scan this QR code or visit www.lichfield-cathedral.org/donate to donate online.



THE FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE

“Candlemas is a feast rich in meaning, with several related themes running through it - presentation, purification, meeting, light for the world. The several names by which it has been known in Christian history - “The Presentation of Christ in the Temple”, “The Purification of Mary”, “Candlemas” - illustrate just how much it has to teach and to celebrate.

But the strongest attraction of Candlemas is the bitter-sweet nature of what it celebrates. It is a feast day, and the revelation of the child Jesus in the Temple, greeted by Simeon and Anna, calls for rejoicing. Nevertheless, the prophetic words of Simeon, which speak of the falling and rising of many and the sword that will pierce, lead on to the Passion and to Easter. The scriptures and the liturgy of the Christmas season have several pointers to the suffering of the Lord, but none more potent than the words of Simeon. Coming as they do at the very end of the Christmas celebration and with Lent nearly always close, they make Candlemas a kind of pivot in the Christian year. It is as if we say ‘One last look back to Christmas, and now, turn towards the cross’”.

adapted from ‘The Promise of his Glory.’

ABOUT THIS EVENING’S SERVICE

The service begins in Christmas and ends in Lent, with the white candle from the Advent wreath being lit at the start (representing the coming of the ‘light of the world’) and ending with only the Paschal Candle lit (the light of the world is ‘a light no darkness can quench’). In this way, it is the mirror image of the Advent Carol Service which began with just a single candle. The first two Old Testament readings provide the background for the Presentation of Christ in the Temple at Jerusalem. The Holy Family were fulfilling the Law in bringing Jesus. The Glory of the Lord in the temple is celebrated in the third and fourth readings and the expectation of His return is fulfilled in the Gospel reading, but only two elderly people recognise him. Having seen the fulfilment of God’s promises we join with Simeon in reflecting on the fate of the child as we turn from crib to cross.

ORGAN

Lumetto: Little Canonic Variations on ‘Jesus bids us shine’

Kenneth Leighton (1929-1988)

Please stand as the choir enters the Crossing to sing

ANTIPHON FOR CANDLEMAS

Music – Richard Lloyd (1933-2021)

We wait for thy loving kindness O God, in the midst of thy temple.
O God, according to thy name, so is thy praise unto the world's end.
Thy right hand is full of righteousness.

Remain standing to sing as the choir and clergy procession moves to the Nave

OF THE FATHER'S HEART BEGOTTEN

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

**2. 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.**

**3. 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.**

**4. 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.**

**5. This is he, whom seer and sibyl
sang in ages long gone by,
This is he of old revealed
in the page of prophecy;
Lo! He comes, the promised Saviour,
let the world his praises cry!
Evermore and evermore.**

**6. Sing, ye heights of heaven, his praises;
Angels and Archangels, sing!
Wheresoe'er ye be, ye faithful,
let your joyous anthems ring,
Ev'ry tongue his name confessing,
countless voices answering
Evermore and evermore.**

Tune: Divinum Mysterium arr. David Willcocks 1919-2015

Words: Prudentius 348-c.413

Translated by J.M. Neale, H.W. Baker and others

Remain standing as the Dean introduces the liturgy

Dear friends, it is now forty days since we celebrated the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now we look to 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. 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.

The white candle from the Advent wreath, first lit on Christmas Day, is lit.

Jesus Christ is the light of the world,
A light no darkness can quench.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
He is worthy of all thanksgiving and praise.

Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe:
to you be glory and praise for ever!
For you are our light and salvation and we your children wait
for your loving kindness in the midst of your temple.
In your Christ, born of the Virgin Mary,
there has sprung up a light for the righteous
and joyful gladness for those who are faithful.

As we, like Simeon and Anna, welcome him with joy,
presented before us as light of all the world,
may we be filled with his Spirit
and made a living temple to the praise and glory of your holy name.
And, as we join our praises with theirs,
grant us a quiet night and a perfect end now and for ever. **Amen.**

Eternal Light, shine into our hearts;
eternal Goodness, deliver us from evil;
eternal Power, be our support;
eternal Wisdom, scatter the darkness of our ignorance;
eternal Pity, have mercy on us;
that with all our heart and mind and strength
we may seek your face and be brought by your infinite mercy
to your holy presence; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Sit

FIRST READING

Exodus 12. 51 - 13. 2, 11-16
Consecrate to me all the first born

The choir sings

THE CANDLE SONG

Words and music – Graham Kendrick

Like a candle flame,
Flickering small in our darkness.
Uncreated light shines through infant eyes.

*God is with us, alleluia,
Come to save us, alleluia!*

Stars and angels sing,
Yet the earth sleeps in shadows;
Can this tiny spark set a world on fire?

*God is with us, alleluia,
Come to save us, alleluia!*

Yet His light shall shine
From our lives, Spirit blazing
As we touch the flame of His holy fire.

*God is with us, alleluia,
Come to save us, alleluia!*

Priest

O Lord,
you have given us your word
for a light to shine upon our path.
Grant us so to meditate on that word
and to follow its teaching,
that we may find in it the light that shines
more and more until the perfect day;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SECOND READING

Leviticus 12. 6 - 8
The Law of Purification

The choir sings

WHEN TO THE TEMPLE MARY WENT
Music – *Johannes Eccard (1553-1611)*

When to the temple Mary went, and brought the Holy Child,
Him did the aged Simeon see, as it had been revealed.
He took up Jesus in his arms and blessing God he said:
In peace I now depart, my Saviour having seen,
The Hope of Israel, the Light of men.
Help now thy servants, gracious Lord, that we may ever be
as once the faithful Simeon was, rejoicing but in Thee;
and when we must from earth departure take,
may gently fall asleep and with Thee wake.

Priest

Almighty and everlasting God,
you have stooped to raise fallen humanity
by the child-bearing of blessed Mary.
Grant that we who have seen your glory revealed in our human nature,
and your love made perfect in our weakness,
may daily be renewed in your image
and conformed to the pattern of your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

THIRD READING

2 Chronicles 5. 2, 5. 13 - 6. 2
The glory of the Lord fills the Temple

Stand to sing

ANGELS FROM THE REALMS OF GLORY

**1. Angels from the realms of glory,
wing your flight o'er all the earth;
ye who sang creation's story
now proclaim Messiah's birth:
*Gloria in excelsis Deo.***

**2. Sages leave your contemplations;
brighter visions beam afar;
seek the great desire of nations;
ye have seen his natal star:
*Gloria in excelsis Deo.***

**3. Saints before the altar bending,
watching long in hope and fear,
suddenly the Lord, descending,
in his temple shall appear:
*Gloria in excelsis Deo.***

**4. Though an infant now we view him,
he shall fill his Father's throne,
gather all the nations to him;
every knee shall then bow down:
*Gloria in excelsis Deo.***

Tune: Iris, arranged by Martin Shaw 1875-1958
Words from Iris 1816 and The Christmas Box 1825
vv.1-4 James Montgomery 1771-1854

Priest

O God, who in the work of creation
commanded the light to shine out of darkness:
we pray that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ
may shine into the hearts of all your people,
dispelling the darkness of ignorance and unbelief,
and revealing to them the knowledge of your glory
in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Sit

FOURTH READING

Isaiah 6. 1 - 8

I saw the Lord, and his train filled the Temple

*During the hymn that follows a **collection** is taken to support the mission and ministry of the Cathedral. Please give as generously as you are able and, if you are a UK taxpayer, use the GiftAid envelopes provided.*

Stand to sing

JUST AS I AM, WITHOUT ONE PLEA

**Just as I am, without one plea
but that thy blood was shed for me,
and that thou bidst me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come.**

**Just as I am, though tossed about
with many a conflict, many a doubt,
fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come.**

**Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind;
sight, riches, healing of the mind,
yea, all I need in thee to find,
O Lamb of God, I come.**

**Just as I am, thou wilt receive,
wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve:
because thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come.**

**Just as I am, thy love unknown
hath broken every barrier down;
now, to be thine, yea, thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come.**

**Just as I am, of that free love
the breadth, length, depth, and height to prove,
here for a season, then above,
O Lamb of God, I come.**

Tune: Saffron Walden by A.H. Brown 1830-1926

Words: Charlotte Elliott 1789-1871

Priest

Lord God almighty,
you have given us the vision of your holiness
and thereby of our own unworthiness to be your witnesses.
Touch, we pray, our lips with your cleansing fire;
that so cleansed and hallowed,
we may go out into the world
with the authority of your commission;
for Jesus Christ's sake. **Amen.**

Sit

FIFTH READING

Hebrews 10.1-10

We have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ

The choir sings

PSALM 40. 8-13

Music – John Goss (1800-1880)

Sacrifice, and meat-offering, thou wouldest not:
but mine ears hast thou opened.

Burnt-offerings, and sacrifice for sin, hast thou not required:
then said I, Lo, I come,

In the volume of the book it is written of me,
that I should fulfil thy will, O my God:
I am content to do it; yea, thy law is within my heart.

I have declared thy righteousness in the great congregation:
lo, I will not refrain my lips, O Lord, and that thou knowest.

I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart:
my talk hath been of thy truth, and of thy salvation.

I have not kept back thy loving mercy and truth:
from the great congregation.

Priest

Father, you make your church on earth
a sign of the new and eternal Jerusalem.
By Word and Sacrament
may we become the temple of your presence
and the home of your glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SIXTH READING

Colossians 1. 15 - 20

In Jesus the fullness of God was pleased to dwell

The choir sings

BETHLEHEM DOWN

Music – Peter Warlock (1894-1930)

“When He is King we will give Him the Kings’ gifts,
Myrrh for its sweetness, and gold for a crown,
Beautiful robes,” said the young girl to Joseph,
Fair with her firstborn on Bethlehem Down.

Bethlehem Down is full of the starlight,
Winds for the spices, and stars for the gold;
Mary for sleep, and for lullaby music,
Songs of a shepherd by Bethlehem fold.

When He is King, they will clothe Him in gravesheets,
Myrrh for embalming, and wood for a crown;
He that lies now in the white arms of Mary,
Sleeping so lightly on Bethlehem Down.

Here He has peace and a short while for dreaming,
Close-huddled oxen to keep Him from cold;
Mary for love, and for lullaby music,
Songs of a shepherd by Bethlehem fold.

*Silence is kept
Stand to sing*

WHEN CANDLES ARE LIGHTED ON CANDLEMAS DAY
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.**

A glory dawns...

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

A glory dawns...

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

A glory dawns...

Turn towards the reading of the Gospel in the middle of the Nave

THE GOSPEL
Luke 2.22-40

The Gospel reader says

We proclaim not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord,
and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.

For the God who said 'Let light shine out of darkness'
has caused his light to shine within us

To give the light of the knowledge of the Glory of God
in the face of Jesus Christ.

Hear the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Saint Luke.
Glory to Christ our Saviour.

*The Gospel is read,
incorporating a setting of the Nunc dimittis by Amy Beach (1897-1944)*

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

The hymn concludes

**They see before Mary a heart-piercing grief,
but trust is complete at the end of their life.**

***A glory dawns in every dark place,
the light of Christ, the fullness of grace.***

**For Mary will follow, with tears in her eyes,
her Saviour and Son to the foot of the cross.**

A glory dawns...

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

A glory dawns...

Tune: Lourdes

Words: Elizabeth Cosnett b.1936

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THE PRAYERS

Sit

In peace let us pray to the Lord:

By the mystery of the Word made flesh

Good Lord, deliver us.

By the birth in time of the timeless Son of God

Good Lord, deliver us.

By the baptism of the Son of God in the river Jordan

Good Lord, deliver us.

For the kingdoms of the world,

that they may become the Kingdom of our Lord and Christ,

We beseech you to hear us, good Lord.

For your holy, catholic and apostolic Church, that it may be one,

We beseech you to hear us, good Lord.

For the witness of your faithful people,

that they may be lights in the world,

We beseech you to hear us, good Lord.

For all those who brought their hopes and prayers
to this place this Christmas,

that they may come to know you more nearly,

We beseech you to hear us, good Lord.

For all for whom prayers were asked in this place,
that they may know the peace of Christ,
We beseech you to hear us, good Lord.

For the poor, the persecuted, the sick, and all who suffer,
that they may be relieved and protected,
We beseech you to hear us, good Lord.

For the aged, the refugees and all in danger,
that they may be strengthened and defended,
We beseech you to hear us, good Lord.

For those who walk in darkness and in the shadow of death,
that they may come to your eternal light,
We beseech you to hear us, good Lord.

Light of the world: we beseech you to hear us.
Light of the world: we beseech you to hear 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.**

The candles of the choir and congregation are lit as the choir sings

CANDLEMAS RESPONSORY

Music – Benjamin Lamb (b.1974)

*To be a light to lighten the Gentiles:
And to be the Glory of thy people Israel.*

Let my prayer be set forth in thy sight as the incense:
and let the lifting up of my hands be an evening sacrifice. *A light...*

The darkness is no darkness with thee,
but the night is as clear as the day:

the darkness and light to thee are both alike. *A light...*

Glory be to the Father and to the Son: And to the Holy Ghost.

*A light to lighten the Gentiles:
And to be the Glory of thy people Israel.*

Luke 2.32, Psalm 141 v.2 & Psalm 139 v.11

The Dean says

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 temple where you live and reign,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Stand to sing the hymn during which the Christmas Candle is carried by the Dean in procession. The people follow on behind the Candle as everyone makes their way to the font.

THOU DIDST LEAVE THY THRONE

**Thou didst leave thy throne and thy kingly crown,
when thou camest to earth for me;
but in Bethlehem's home was there found no room
for thy holy nativity:**

*O come to my heart, Lord Jesus;
there is room in my heart for thee.*

**Heaven's arches rang when the angels sang,
proclaiming thy royal degree;
but in lowly birth didst thou come to earth,
and in great humility: *O come to my heart ...***

**Thou camest, O Lord, with the living word
that should set thy children free;
but with mocking scorn and with crown of thorn,
they bore thee to Calvary: *O come to my heart ...***

**When the heavens shall ring, and the angels sing,
at thy coming to victory,
let thy voice call me home, saying 'Yet there is room,
there is room at my side for thee:' *O come to my heart ...***

*Tune: Margaret by T.R. Matthews 1826-1910
Words: Emily Elizabeth Steele Elliott 1836-1897*

Remain standing as the Choir sings

A NEW YEAR CAROL

Music – Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

The Paschal Candle is lit from the Christmas Candle which is now extinguished, along with all the people's candles and the altar candles

Here we bring new water from the well so clear,
For to worship God with, this happy New Year.
*Sing levy dew, sing levy dew, the water and the wine;
The seven bright gold wires and the bugles that do shine.*

Sing reign of Fair Maid, with gold upon her toe,
Open you the West Door, and turn the Old Year go.
Sing levy dew...

Sing reign of Fair Maid, with gold upon her chin,
Open you the East Door, and let the New Year in.
Sing levy dew...

Words Anon.

from Tom Tiddler's Ground by Walter de la Mare

THE COLLECT FOR THE FEAST OF CANDLEMAS

Almighty Father,
whose Son Jesus Christ was presented in the Temple
and acclaimed the glory of Israel and the light of the nations:
grant that in him we may be presented to you
and in the world reflect his glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Dean continues

Father, here we bring to an end
our celebration of the Saviour's birth.
**Help us, in whom he has been born,
to live his life that has no end.**

Here we have offered the Church's sacrifice of praise.
**Help us, who have received the bread of life,
to be thankful for your gift.**

Here we have rejoiced with faithful Simeon and Anna.
**Help us, who have found the Lord in his temple,
to trust in your eternal promises.**

Here we have greeted the light of the world.
**Help us, who extinguish these candles,
never to forsake the light of Christ.**

Here we stand near the place of baptism.
**Help us, who are marked with the cross,
to share the Lord's death and resurrection.**

Here we turn from Christ's birth to his passion.
**Help us, for whom Lent is near,
to enter deeply into the Easter mystery.**

Here we bless one another in your name.
**Help us, who now go in peace,
to shine with your light in the world.
Thanks be to God. Amen.**

The clergy and people depart.

ORGAN VOLUNTARY

Lumen ad revelationem gentium
Marcel Dupré (1886-1971)

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