

PARISH OF WHITTON

MORNING WORSHIP

28th JANUARY 2024, CANDLEMAS

“God became as we are, so that we might become as he is.”

Phone in on: 020 3481 5240 or 020 808 06591

Or join us via the internet using ZOOM if you are able:

Meeting ID; 9483407 2630 password: 343860

We are made welcome:

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you **and also with you.**

We pray together

Lord, as we come to worship you today:
We thank you for your generous love for your world.
We thank you for coming to bring us new life
and to teach us how to live. Help us to love you and each other,
and help us to learn together today how we can show our love for you
in the way we respond to your call. Amen

We set the scene for the service

We listen to the words of a hymn:

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?

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

Graham Kendrick © 1988 Make Way Music, www.grahamkendrick.co.uk

We hear our Gospel Reading: Luke 3: 22 – 40 (Translated by J B Phillips)

When the “purification” time, stipulated by the Law of Moses, was completed, Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. This was to fulfil

a requirement of the Law—‘Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord’. They also offered the sacrifice prescribed by the Law—‘A pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons’.

In Jerusalem was a man by the name of Simeon. He was an upright man, devoted to the service of God, living in expectation of the “salvation of Israel”. His heart was open to the Holy Spirit, and it had been revealed to him that he would not die before he saw the Lord’s Christ. He had been led by the Spirit to go into the Temple, and when Jesus’ parents brought the child in to have done to him what the Law required, he took him up in his arms, blessed God, and said—“At last, Lord, you can dismiss your servant in peace, as you promised! For with my own eyes I have seen your salvation which you have made ready for every people—a light to show truth to the Gentiles and bring glory to your people Israel.”

The child’s father and mother were still amazed at what was said about him, when Simeon gave them his blessing. He said to Mary, the child’s mother, “This child is destined to make many fall and many rise in Israel and to set up a standard which many will attack—for he will expose the secret thoughts of many hearts. And for you ... your very soul will be pierced by a sword.”

There was also present, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Asher, who was a prophetess. She was a very old woman, having had seven years’ married life and was now a widow of eighty-four. She spent her whole life in the Temple and worshipped God night and day with fasting and prayers. She came up at this very moment, praised God and spoke about Jesus to all those in Jerusalem who were expecting redemption.

When they had completed all the requirements of the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew up and became strong and full of wisdom. And God’s blessing was upon him

We read from the Bible (see the pew sheet)

Hebrews 2: 10, 11, 13b – 18 (*Translation from “The Message”*)

It makes good sense that the God who got everything started and keeps everything going, now completes the work by making the Salvation Pioneer perfect through suffering, as he leads all these people to glory. Since the One who saves and those who are saved have a common origin, Jesus doesn’t hesitate to treat them as family, saying, ... “I’m here with the children God gave me.”

Since the children are made of flesh and blood, it’s logical that the Saviour took on flesh and blood in order to rescue them by his death. By embracing death, taking it into himself, he destroyed the Devil’s hold on death and freed all who cower through life, scared to death of death.

It's obvious, of course, that he didn't go to all this trouble for angels. It was for people like us, children of Abraham. That's why he had to enter into every detail of human life. Then, when he came before God as high priest to get rid of the people's sins, he would have already experienced it all himself—all the pain, all the testing—and would be able to help where help was needed.

We listen to the words of a hymn

**Praise to the Holiest in the height, and in the depth be praise:
in all his words most wonderful, most sure in all his ways.**

**O loving wisdom of our God! When all was sin and shame,
a second Adam to the fight and to the rescue came.**

**O wisest love! that flesh and blood, which did in Adam fail,
should strive afresh against the foe, should strive and should prevail;**

**And that a higher gift than grace should flesh and blood refine,
God's presence and his very self, and essence all-divine.**

**O generous love! that he, who smote in Man for man the foe,
the double agony in Man for man should undergo;**

**And in the garden secretly, and on the cross on high,
should teach his brethren, and inspire to suffer and to die.**

**Praise to the Holiest in the height, and in the depth be praise:
in all his words most wonderful, most sure in all his ways.**

We think about the readings

We affirm our shared faith in God

Let us affirm our common faith in God.

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, who made the world?

I believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in his Son Jesus Christ, who redeemed mankind?

I believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in his Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God?

I believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We ask God to forgive us for the things we regret, and to help us to do better

We have a moment of silence

Heavenly Father, you intended us to be loving and creative, as you are, but we sometimes live self-centredly and unimaginatively, limiting what we and others could be. Forgive us and help us to listen to your words.

Lord, have mercy **Lord, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you showed us what humans are capable of if they in a close relationship to our Heavenly Father. Forgive us for the times we have not forgiven others, and help us to live generously, following you, the Living Word.

Christ, have mercy **Christ, have mercy**

Holy Spirit of God, you enable us to do things we can't manage on our own. Forgive us for the times we've not listened to your prompting, and help us to be guided and empowered by you as we try to live lives of loving obedience.

Lord, have mercy **Lord, have mercy**

We are forgiven

May the Father of all mercies cleanse *us* from *our* sins and restore *us* in his image, to the praise and glory of his name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

We say a special prayer for today

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. **Amen**

We pray for the world, and for ourselves:

Lord of life, bringing light to the nations, **Hear our prayer**

At the end:

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

We join to say the church's family prayer

Jesus taught us to call God our Father, so in faith and trust we pray...

**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.

We use the words of hymn to draw together our thoughts and prayers

**Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!
Unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice;
Tender to me the promise of His Word;
In God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.**

**Tell out, my soul, the greatness of His name!
Make known His might, the deeds His arm has done;
His mercy sure, from age to age the same;
His holy Name, the Lord, the mighty One.**

**Tell out, my soul, the greatness of His might!
Powers and dominions lay their glory by;
Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight;
The hungry fed, the humble lifted high.**

**Tell out, my soul, the glories of His Word!
Firm is His promise, and His mercy sure.
Tell out my soul, the greatness of the Lord
To children's children and for evermore!**

We offer our lives and our gifts to God

Loving God, we thank you for hearing our prayers,
feeding us with your word, and encouraging us in our meeting together.
**Take us and use us to love and serve you, and all people, in the power of your Spirit
and in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

We are blessed and sent out into the world:

**May God's blessing be upon you now; May you know of his great love for you.
May God's blessing be upon you now, Right where you are.**

Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord
In the name of Christ, Amen

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