**Candlemas Service Sunday 31st January 2021**

Welcome

*A Candle is lit*

***Introduction***

Forty days ago we celebrated the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now we recall 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. In this service, 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.

**Hymn Like a candle flame**

*sung by the Choral Scholars of St Martin-in-the-Fields*

1 Like a candle flame,
 flick'ring small in our darkness.
 Uncreated light
 shines through infant eyes.

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

2 Stars and angels sing,
 yet the earth sleeps in shadows;
 can this tiny spark
 set a world on fire?
 *Chorus*

3 Yet His light shall shine
 from our lives, Spirit blazing,
 as we touch the flame
 of His holy fire.
 *Chorus*

*Graham Kendrick (born 1950)
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***Other candles are lit and if you have a candle at home you could light during this hymn.***

*Blessing of the light*

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 the 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**

 Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

**All: He is worthy of all thanksgiving and praise.**

***The Confession***

Hear the words of our Saviour Jesus Christ:

‘I am the light of the world.

Whoever follows me shall never walk in darkness but shall have the light of life.’

Let us therefore bring our sins into his light and confess them in penitence and faith.

*silence as we think of all the things we have done wrong and need to ask forgiveness for*

*All*    **Father eternal, giver of light and grace,**

**we have sinned against you and against our neighbour,**

**in what we have thought,** **in what we have said and done,**

**through ignorance, through weakness,** **through our own deliberate fault.**

**We have wounded your love,** **and marred your image in us.**

**We are sorry and ashamed,** **and repent of all our sins.**

**For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,** **who died for us,**

**forgive us all that is past;** **and lead us out from darkness**

**to walk as children of light.** **Amen.**

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent,

have mercy upon *you*, pardon and deliver *you* from all *your* sins,

confirm and strengthen *you* in all goodness, and keep *you* in life eternal;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*All*    **Amen.**

*Reading: Malachi 3: 1-5*

*Reading: Luke 2 vs 22 – 40*

*After each reading to the words*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All: Thanks be to God**

*Sermon*

The Creed

 Do you believe and trust in God the Father,

 Who made all things?

**All: we believe and trust in him**.

 Do you believe and trust in his Son Jesus Christ,

 Who redeemed the world?

**All: We believe and trust in him.**

 Do you believe and trust in his Holy Spirit,

 Who gives life to the people of God?

**All: We believe and trust in him.**

 This is the faith of the Church:

**All: This is our faith.**

 **We believe and trust in one God,**

 **Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen**

**The Prayers**

**The Collect for the Day**

Let us pray that we may know and share the light of Christ.

*Silence is kept.*

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.

*All*   **Amen.**

**All: 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**

**Nunc dimittis – Plainsong, arr. John Harper**

*sung by St Martin’s Voices*

Now Lord you let your servant go in peace:

your word has been fulfilled.

My own eyes have seen: the salvation;

Which you have prepared: in the sight of every people,

A light to reveal you to the nations:

and the glory of your people Israel.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son,

and to the Holy Spirit,

as it was in the beginning, is now and shall be forever.

Amen.

*During the Nunc Dimittis all candles are extinguished and the service moves to the font.*

Here we turn from our celebration of Christ’s coming into the world and towards Lent and Easter; turning from his birth to his passion and resurrection.

 Father, here we bring to an end our celebration

 of the Saviour’s birth.

**All: Help us, in whom he has been born,**

 **to live his life that has no end.**

 Here we have rejoiced with faithful Simeon and Anna.

**All: 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.

**All: Help us, as we extinguish these candles,**

 **never to forsake the light of Christ.**

*The Candles at home are extinguished*

 Here we stand at the place of baptism

**All: 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.

**All: Help us, for whom Lent is near,**

 **to enter into the Easter mystery.**

Here we bless one another in your name.

**All: Help us, who now go in peace,**

 **to shine with your light in the world.**

 **Thanks be to God. Amen.**

*The Blessing*

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 you and remain with you always. **Amen**

We stand near the place of new birth

**All: Let us shine with the light of your love.**

 We turn from the crib to the cross

**All: Let us shine with the light of your love.**

We go to carry his light.

**All: Let us shine with the light of your love.**

 **Thanks be to God**

**Hymn**

 1 Faithful vigil ended,
 watching, waiting cease;
 Master, grant thy servant
 his discharge in peace.

2 All thy Spirit promised,
 all the Father willed,
 now these eyes behold it
 perfectly fulfilled.

3 This thy great deliverance
 sets thy people free;
 Christ their light uplifted
 all the nations see.

4 Christ, thy people's glory!
 watching, doubting cease:
 grant to us thy servants
 our discharge in peace.

*Timothy Dudley-Smith (born 1926) from Luke 2 vs 29-32
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