



This Sunday at St. Luke's
February 2, 2025

8:15 a.m. – Holy Communion (said service)

10:15 a.m. – Holy Communion with Organ, Choir and Hymns

Diana Burden, Pianist

The Presentation of Christ in the Temple **(The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany)**



The Presentation of Christ in the Temple: Candlemas

Forty days after Christmas, our celebration of Jesus' incarnation culminates in the feast of The Presentation of Christ in the Temple on 2 February — the end of the Christmas cycle. It is sometimes known as Candlemas, as traditionally on this day candles—sources of light—were blessed for use

throughout the year.

Forty days after His birth, in accordance with the law of Moses, Jesus' parents presented him at the temple. There Simeon called him a "Light to the Gentiles" and the "Glory of Israel". We know Simeon's words as the *Nunc Dimittis* one of the canticles of evening prayer. Simeon also spoke prophetically to Mary that Jesus would be "the

(continued, next page)

cause of the rise and fall of many in Israel," revealing the secrets of many hearts.

Candlemas is a pivot in the Church's calendar; from then on our focus changes from the person of Jesus towards the work of Jesus — towards Lent and his passion and death.

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This Sunday has three names: The Presentation of Christ in the Temple, the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Candlemas. The last of these names — Candlemas — comes from the middle ages when candles were carried in procession reminding worshippers that they belonged to Christ, the light of the world, who had come to “show truth to the gentiles and bring glory to God’s people, Israel”.

The Law of Moses, laid it down that every first-born male child belonged to God (he was “holy to the Lord”), and his parents could only obtain his release from temple or other direct service by paying the priest a sum of money. In the case of the mother there was a purification time of forty days (note that December 25 to February 2 is 40 days.); she offered her sacrifice — in this case a pair of pigeons — and then with the blessing of the priest returned once more to ordinary life. It was for these two reasons that the Holy Family had come this day to the temple.

In the Collect we ask that “we may be presented to God with pure and clean hearts.” What did the compilers of the Prayer Book mean by this? Likely, as recall by the Infant Jesus being presented as one dedicated to God, so we renew our dedication to the service of the heavenly Father. (H.W. Dobson)

COLLECT FOR THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE

ALMIGHTY and everliving God, we humbly beseech thy Majesty, that, as thy only-begotten Son was this day presented in the temple in substance of our flesh, so we may be presented unto thee with pure and clean hearts, by the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

COLLECT FOR EPIPHANY 4

O GOD, who knowest us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright; Grant to us such strength and protection, as may support us in all dangers, and carry us through all temptations; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

FOR THE EPISTLE – MALACHI 3:1-5 (J.B. Phillips)

The coming messenger

See, I send my messenger to clear the way before me, and the Lord whom you long for will come suddenly to his Temple! That messenger of the Covenant, whom you so desire, is coming, says the Lord of Hosts. But who can face the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he is like the refining fire of the furnace, like the harsh soap of the bleacher, and he will sit down to refine and purify. He will purify the sons of Levi, and refine them like gold and silver until they are men who make true offerings to the Lord.

Then shall the sacrifices of Judah and Jerusalem be acceptable to the Lord, as they were in days of old, and as they were in days gone by.

Then I will draw near to you for judgement. I shall be a ready witness against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers; against those who oppress the widow and the orphan, who cheat the hired man of his wages; against those who ill-treat the foreigner because they have no fear of me.

These are the words of the Lord of Hosts.”

¹⁷ Don't pay back a bad turn by a bad turn, to anyone. Don't say “it doesn't matter what people think”, but see that your public behaviour is above criticism.

¹⁸ As far as your responsibility goes, live at peace with everyone.

¹⁹ Never take vengeance into your own hands, my dear friends: stand back and let God punish if he will. For it is written: ‘Vengeance is mine. I will repay’.

²⁰⁻²¹ ... these are God's words: ‘Therefore if your enemy hungers, feed him; if he thirsts, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head’. Don't allow yourself to be overpowered with evil. Take the offensive—overpower evil by good!

NOTE: God speaks to His people through the prophet saying that He will send His messenger who will come suddenly to the Temple. The messenger will be the bearer of judgment. He who was presented as a child in the Temple is also He who will come to judge. (William Sydner)

THE GOSPEL – St. Luke 2:22-40 (J.B. Phillips)

Mary and Joseph bring their newly-born son to the Temple

²¹ At the end of the eight days, the time came for circumcising the child and he was called Jesus, the name given to him by the angel before his conception.

²²⁻²³ When the “purification” time, stipulated by the Law of Moses, was completed, they 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’.

²⁴ They also offered the sacrifice prescribed by the Law—‘A pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons’.

²⁵⁻³² 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."

³³⁻³⁵ 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."

³⁶⁻³⁸ 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 fastings and prayers. She came up at this very moment, praised God and spoke about Jesus to all those in Jerusalem who were expecting redemption.

³⁹⁻⁴⁰ 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.

NOTE: Here is the Gospel account of the presentation of the Christ Child in the Temple and his reception by the venerable Simeon and aged Anna, a prophetess. (William Sydnor)

LECTIONARY READING

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON – 1 Samuel 1:21-28 (RSV)

Samuel is presented by his mother to the Lord

1 ²¹ And the man Elka'nah and all his house went up to offer to the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and to pay his vow. ²² But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, "As soon as the child is weaned, I will bring him, that he may appear in the presence of the LORD, and abide there forever." ²³ Elka'nah her husband said to her, "Do what seems best to you, wait until you have weaned him; only, may the LORD establish his word." So the woman remained and nursed her son, until she weaned him. ²⁴ And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, along with a three-year-old bull,^[b] an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine; and she brought him to the house of the LORD at Shiloh; and the child was young. ²⁵ Then they slew the bull, and they brought the child to Eli. ²⁶ And she said, "Oh, my lord! As you live, my lord, I am the woman who was standing here in your presence, praying to the LORD. ²⁷ For this child

I prayed; and the LORD has granted me my petition which I made to him. ²⁸ Therefore I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he lives, he is lent to the LORD.”

And they worshiped the LORD there.

NOTE: In a sense the presenting of the child Samuel in the House of God is the Old Testament counterpart of the presentation of the Christ Child. Each child was dedicated to the Lord in a similar pious act by his mother. (William Sydnor)

THIS SUNDAY

Preacher: The Rector

Options

In-church.

Online. Services are livestreamed on Facebook and available for viewing following the service on YouTube. To access both put “Parish Church of St. Luke, Blue Ridge, Ga.” In the search bar.



Tip of the Canterbury Cap to Gordan Bailey for repairing the staff of the antique Richard Hooker Wilmer processional cross which is attached to the choir pews on the Gospel side.



JOIN THE CHOIR!



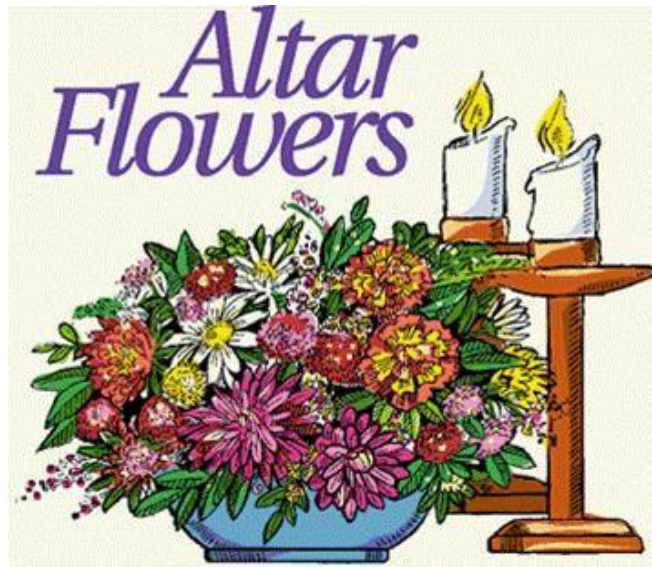
For information, contact, Diana Burden at 678-852-6907 or email dburden6907@gmail.com.



The Anglican Relief
and Development Fund

OUR MISSION

St. Luke's mission is to grow spiritually in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ and in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit and to share our faith, our hands and hearts for the sake of the Gospel, our community and the world.



SIGN-UP FOR FLOWERS

A sign-up sheet for Altar flowers is available in Thomason Hall for 2025.

Please sign up for days you wish to commemorate.

Flowers are needed throughout the end of the year. Please email or call Kathryn Noblett at the church office to sign up.

Financial Pledge for the Year of our Lord 2025

As stewards of God's gifts and in gratitude for all blessings, I pledge the following amount to the work of Christ through St. Luke's Church for 2025

Name

Address

Amount

_____ Weekly _____ Monthly _____ Yearly

(Please tick the appropriate blank)



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