



**All in
this
together
for God**



**The Parish of
The Good Shepherd,
Ashton-under-Lyne**

NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2022

Price 20p

**Please do not come to church if you have any COVID symptoms
Do wear a mask if it makes you feel more comfortable
Hand sanitiser will be available for you to use**

Worship in February

February 6th

St James 9.30a m. - Service of the Word

St Gabriel's 9.30a.m. – Eucharist

St Michael's 11.00a.m. – Eucharist

St Peter's 9.30a.m. Service of the Word

Service on Thursday February 10th

Holy Trinity 3.30p.m. – Eucharist

February 13th

St James 9.30am - Eucharist

St Gabriel's 9.30am Eucharist

St Michael's 11.00am Eucharist

St Peter's 11.00am – Eucharist

St James on Sunday Afternoon 4.00pm Eucharist

Service on Thursday February 17th

Holy Trinity 3.30p.m. – Evening Prayer

February 20th

St James 9.30a.m. – Service of the Word

St Gabriel's 9.30a.m. – Eucharist

St Michael's 11.0a.m. – Service of the Word

St Peter's 11.00a.m. Eucharist

Service on Thursday February 24th

Holy Trinity 3.30p.m. Evening Prayer

February 27th

St James 9.30a.m. – Eucharist

St Gabriel's 9.30a.m. – Eucharist

St Michael's 11.00a.m. – Eucharist

St Peter's 11.00a.m. – Service of the Word

St James on Sunday Afternoon 4.00p.m.

Wednesday March 2nd – Ash Wednesday Service at St Gabriel's 7.30pm

Service on Thursday March 3^d

Holy Trinity 3.30pm – Evening Prayer

Growing Up with God

Luke 2:³⁹ "When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth.

⁴⁰ And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him."



February is a strange month to me. It is the shortest in number of days, but those days get longer as the sun rises earlier and sets later, and in leap years has an extra day. In the Church year we go into a period of Ordinary Time. Christmas, Epiphany have been celebrated. The 2nd of February brings the celebration of Candlemas, the Churches end of the Christmas season and a time when candles to be used for the next year are blessed. Then we pause waiting for Ash Wednesday and Lent leading into Easter.



The secular year celebrates Valentine's Day on 14th, based on possibly two Christian Martyrs who were killed for helping others (something to research on gloomy February days!). Chinese New Year on February 1st 2022 is the Year of the Tiger and sees the Winter Olympics in Beijing. Will that bring exciting sport or controversy with the Chinese government policies and the spread of Covid? World Thinking Day is celebrated on February 22nd by millions of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts around the world.



Let's focus on Candlemas and how that begins and encourages Growing with God. The scriptures passages from **Malachi 3:1-5** and Luke 2:22-40, provide the context and story of Jesus being presented in the Temple.

Have you ever been presented anywhere? A debutante or deb (from the French *débutante*, "female beginner") was a girl or young woman of an aristocratic or upper-class family who has reached maturity and, as a new adult, is presented or comes out into society at a formal "debut". Originally, the term meant the woman was old enough to be married, and part of the purpose of her coming out was to display her to eligible

bachelors and their families with a view to marriage within a select circle. The tradition of being presented at court as a debutante ended in 1958 as it was no longer deemed relevant and appropriate in modern society.

We are presented in general society when someone introduces us to new person; at a Wedding when the bride and groom are presented as the new Mr and Mrs; as a new Baby to parents and Grandparents who are wise, and experienced with questions often asked being who do they look like or, what will they be? We are presented to God at our Baptism and Confirmation as we are welcomed into the Christian family and at Ordination into a vocation as a servant of God. Being presented heralds a new phase in life, new beginnings, new opportunities, new fears and hopes, a new stage as we grow up with God

At Candlemas we celebrate Jesus being presented in the temple. This was an Old Testament tradition – presenting the child to God the Holy One, purifying the mother after the birth, and paying the appropriate amount of sacrifice. Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the temple and encountered two other people Simeon and Anna

***Simeon** represented the moral world he was waiting for God to comfort Israel and share the good news with everyone including Gentiles. He also spoke of a sword piercing Mary's side as she would know pain and anguish bringing up her son – as we do in our fellowship with God. After he had encountered Jesus Simeon spoke the familiar words of the Nunc Dimitis.*

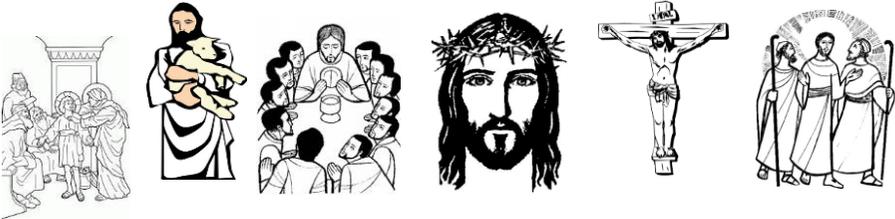


***Anna** represented the spiritual world. She was 84 years old and lived in temple worshipping and giving time to God. She recognised the importance of this child to Israel and the world and began to share news of God's redemption through Jesus*

All ages and generations were at this meeting. Jesus is for everyone and shares intergenerational grace. The Presentation marks Jesus acknowledgement by the temple. He was a new baby but what will he

be and what will he do. We replicate the presentation of Jesus the Light of the World in the temple by blessing new candles in our homes and churches that will illuminate the next year

Time to turn from the baby in the manger to the man he would grow up into with all his joys and trials. Jesus growing up, like a Photo Album of This is your Life.



Mary's anguish at her 12-year-old son missing in the temple, Jesus' ministry as the Good Shepherd - a son who belongs to all not just his family (who are my brothers and sisters?), the Last Supper with his friends and the institution of Holy Communion, his trial and death by Crucifixion, his ultimate resurrection, and his appearance on the road to Emmaus

What will we become as we grow up? Yes, we are still growing up whatever age we are. Those who are older in years like Anna often show exemplary constancy and commitment in prayer and worship. They will have negotiated a huge shift in cultural and religious change, as we all do especially in recent times with the Covid pandemic.

There will be sorrow amidst the joy of our growing Christian lives. Family and friends are source of great happiness and we invest much time and emotion into relationships. But we are flawed human beings, relationships can cause us heartache, may make us feel inadequate. Stop expecting perfect relationships we see on TV etc., accept that love can bring sorrow as well as joy, life will be more rewarding

Our relationship with God needs to be realistic, he doesn't give instant cures, resolutions to problems or a straight path. We are journeying

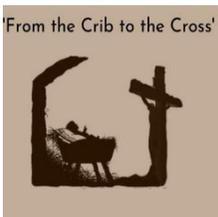
through time in the now and not yet of salvation, we are growing with God, including growing pains, and that growth never ends.

Simeon is a do'er but Anna stops to contemplate. Like Mary and Martha the sisters of Lazarus. Sometimes it is better to 'waste time' as some would deem it, to sit in the quiet and wait on the Lord instead of having to be busy all the time. We can't hear God because of the noise of our actions. Develop a habit of wasting time with God!



Trust God to walk with us until we enter his light and glory, as he helps us to grow in love and care.

At home, take a new candle and light it, saying these words:



**We stand near the place of new birth.
Let us shine with the light of your love.
We turn from the crib to the cross.
Let us shine with the light of your love.
We go to carry his light.
Let us shine with the light of your love.
Thanks be to God.**

Lent 2022

We shall be buying Lent books for people who would like to use them, so that they can spend time at home reflecting on Bible Readings and using the printed prayers for their personal journey though Lent. Please let your Warden(s) know if you would like one. We shall need to order them mid-February to ensure that they are here for the start of Lent.

Revd Pat Lodge



Would you like a prayer list on the Newsletter of names of those who need our prayers at the moment?

Just let Pat know – 07986 759405 or mrspelodge@gmail.com

St James' Winter Fair
Saturday 12th February 10am-1pm

Hot and cold refreshments available
Home Bake Stall Book Stall Chocolate Tombola
50% of funds raised will be donated to
the British Heart Foundation

Contact Information

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