

Reflection for Candlemas

I wonder if any of you saw the free solo climber, Alex Honnold, make it to the top of the 538m Taiwanese skyscraper "Taipei 101" last Sunday? My family were incredulous at this amazing act of bravery/stupidity/courage – it was indeed an incredible feat; terrifying, nail-biting and an example of faith and trust, one step at a time.

Today, we celebrate Candlemas which is also about faith and trust. Trusting in the light that we have been given, taking one step at a time forwards in faith to recognise Jesus as the Light of the World. Candlemas marks a liminal position in our liturgical year – the final Sunday of Epiphany looking back to Christmas, whilst also looking ahead to Lent and Easter. Our candles and reflection of light do not negate the shadows of death and suffering to come, but they anticipate a future of hope where Jesus triumphs over death and light wins over the darkness.

And so on this Candlemas Sunday, as we light our candles and reflect on Jesus the Light of the World, may we remember that even a small flame is enough to guide us forward and place our trust and faith in the source of all light, Jesus Christ, our Saviour.

Rev Sarah



NEXT SUNDAY 08.02.26 2nd Sunday before Lent

10.30am in the Hall



OT Genesis 1: 1-2,3
NT Romans 8: 18-25
GOSPEL Matthew 6: 25-34

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St Thomas, Exeter

1st February 2026

Candlemas

10.30am in the Hall

Today

Sung Eucharist

Hymn Numbers

Light of the World

Like a Candle Flame

293 Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us

329 Make way, make way for Christ the King

Tuesday 3rd February

7.30pm House Group at Helen's house

Wednesday 4th February

10am Walsingham Mass

7.15pm PCC meeting in the Choir Vestry

Thursday 5th February

9.30-11am St Thomas Tots

10.30-12noon Knit & Natter at Jenny Tuckett's house

Friday 6th February

9.30am Morning Prayer

10am Staff Meeting



Collect

Lord Jesus Christ, light of the nations: make your home among us, and present us pure and holy to your heavenly Father, your God, and our God.

Amen

Malachi 3:1-5

The Lord of heaven's armies says, "I will send my messenger. He will prepare the way for me to come. Suddenly, the Lord you are looking for will come to his Temple. The messenger of the agreement, whom you want, will come." No one can live through that time. No one can survive when he comes. He will be like a purifying fire. He will be like laundry soap. He will be like someone who heats and purifies silver. He will purify the Levites. He will make them pure like gold and silver. Then they will bring offerings to the Lord in the right way. And he will accept the offerings from Judah and Jerusalem. It will be as it was in the past. The Lord of heaven's armies says, "Then I will come to you and judge you. I will testify against those who take part in evil magic, adultery and lying. I will testify against those who cheat workers of their pay and who cheat widows and orphans. And I will testify against those who are unfair to foreigners. These people do not respect me.

Hebrews 2: 14-end

Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested by

what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

Luke 2:22-40

The time came for Mary and Joseph to do what the law of Moses taught about being made pure. They took Jesus to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. It is written in the law of the Lord: "Give every firstborn male to the Lord." Mary and Joseph also went to offer a sacrifice, as the law of the Lord says: "You must sacrifice two doves or two young pigeons." A man named Simeon lived in Jerusalem. He was a good man and very religious. He was waiting for the time when God would help Israel. The Holy Spirit was in him. The Holy Spirit told Simeon that he would not die before he saw the Christ promised by the Lord. The Spirit led Simeon to the Temple. Mary and Joseph brought the baby Jesus to the Temple to do what the law said they must do. Then Simeon took the baby in his arms and thanked God: "Now, Lord, you can let me, your servant, die in peace as you said. I have seen your Salvation with my own eyes. You prepared him before all people. He is a light for the non-Jewish people to see. He will bring honour to your people, the Israelites." Jesus' father and mother were amazed at what Simeon had said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, "Many in Israel will fall and many will rise because of this child. He will be a sign from God that many people will not accept. The things they think in secret will be made known. And the things that will happen will make your heart sad, too." Anna a prophetess, was there at the Temple. She was from the family of Phanel in the tribe of Asher. Anna was very old. She had once been married for seven years. Then her husband died and she lived alone. She was now 84 years old. Anna never left the Temple. She worshiped God by going without food and praying day and night. She was standing there at that time, thanking God. She talked about Jesus to all who were waiting for God to free Jerusalem. Joseph and Mary finished doing everything that the law of the Lord commanded. Then

they went home to Nazareth, their own town in Galilee. The little child began to grow up. He became stronger and wiser, and God's blessings were with him.

Post Communion

Lord, you fulfilled the hope of Simeon and Anna, who lived to welcome the Messiah: may we, who have received these gifts beyond words, prepare to meet Christ Jesus when he comes to bring us to eternal life; for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever. **Amen**

Notices

Would you like to know more about what goes on in our Diocese and wider church? If so, do subscribe to the weekly newsletter Roots and Shoots, available through the Diocesan website. This week, Bishop Mike has announced that Exeter Diocese has been successful in our bid for funding to support Mission and Ministry in the Diocese as part of the Pray – Grow – Serve 2035 Plan. Do have a look on the Diocesan website for more information or speak to Rev Sarah.

Next Wednesday evening, your PCC will meet to discuss ongoing governance in this church. One of the topics that we will discuss is the Parish Profile that we will use to advertise the role of Rector at St Thomas. Please continue to pray for this process and that the right people will feel called to apply, and for your PCC as they seek to prepare St Thomas for its next chapter.

Please join us in making some hearts after the service that we will be distributing in our community on behalf of the church on Saturday 14 February. If you would like to come along and hand out some hearts, please do let Rev Sarah know – she would love you to join her, even if just for 30 minutes!

Are you or is someone you know interested in some creative training? The Diocese is offering some excellent training on pioneer mission from April 2026 to March 2027 (in person and on zoom during evenings and weekends) Please speak to Liz or email for details.