

West Downland Benefice

United Benefice Service on Zoom

'Poetry and Prayers'

29th January 2023,
The Presentation of Christ in the Temple
'Candlemas'

Welcome

This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Introduction

Poem 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree' W.B. Yeats
Read by Shirley Harniman



I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made:
Nine bean rows will I have there, a hive for the honey bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping
slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket
sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements gray,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

*Silence as we imagine our own Lake Isles, the places and
companions who enable us to find peace.*

Poem 'Thank You' An Acrostic Anon
Read by Jo Graham-Campbell

Thank you for our world,
Here and everywhere
Abundant with wildlife
Nature with all its wonder.
Kindnesses great and small.

Yesterdays, today and tomorrows
Our communities and families
Understanding our frailities.

A General Thanksgiving

from the Book of Common Prayer
Read by Polly Capron

ALMIGHTY God, Father of all mercies, we thine unworthy servants do give thee most humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all men. We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we shew forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives; by giving up ourselves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost be all honour and glory, world without end. **Amen.**

Bible Reading Luke 2.22–28; 33-35
Read by the de Chazal Family

Jesus Is Presented in the Temple

²² The time came for Joseph and Mary to perform the ceremony of purification, as the Law of Moses commanded. So they took the child to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, ²³ as it is written in the law of the Lord: "Every first-born male is to be dedicated to the Lord." ²⁴ They also went to offer a sacrifice of a pair of doves or two young pigeons, as required by the law of the Lord.

²⁵ At that time there was a man named Simeon living in Jerusalem. He was a good, God-fearing man and was waiting for Israel to be saved. The Holy Spirit was with him ²⁶ and had assured him that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's promised Messiah. ²⁷ Led by the Spirit, Simeon went into the Temple. When the parents brought the child Jesus into the Temple to do for him what the Law required, ²⁸ Simeon took the child in his arms and gave thanks to God.

³³ The child's father and mother were amazed at the things Simeon said about him. ³⁴ Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother, "This child is chosen by God for the destruction and the salvation of many in Israel. He will be a sign from God which many people will speak against ³⁵ and so reveal their secret thoughts. And sorrow, like a sharp sword, will break your own heart."

Simeon's Song Luke 2: 29-32 *Authorised Version*

Read by Evelyn Bracey

²⁹ Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace,
according to thy word:

³⁰ for mine eyes have seen thy salvation,

³¹ which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;

³² a light to lighten the Gentiles,
and the glory of thy people Israel.

Poem 'Candlemas Song' Simon Marshall

Read by Sue Ridgeway

I was not there.
I did not dream my way
up prayer-worn Temple steps
as you did, Christ-Mother, that day.

I was not there.
I did not scan the gloom
or clutch a hand for courage
in the Temple waiting-room.

I was not there.
I did not hear the praise
which ancient ones sang of your child
at the midnight of their days.

I was not there.
I did not feel the sting
which bitter-sweet horizons
of your motherhood will bring.

But I am here.
And I would know a birth
to bring Divine Light's love
into an aching, longing earth.

Yes, I am here.
And I would do my part.
O let a rising blade of Spring
strike fire into my heart.

Prayer of St Francis of Assisi

Read by Shirley Harniman

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy Peace,
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.
O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved, as to love;
for it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

Poem 'The Way Through the Woods' Rudyard Kipling
Introduced and read by Denise Herrington



They shut the road through the woods
Seventy years ago.
Weather and rain have undone it again,
And now you would never know
There was once a road through the woods
Before they planted the trees.
It is underneath the coppice and heath,
And the thin anemones.
Only the keeper sees
That, where the ring-dove broods,
And the badgers roll at ease,
There was once a road through the woods.

Yet, if you enter the woods
Of a summer evening late,
When the night-air cools on the trout-ringed pools
Where the otter whistles his mate,
(They fear not men in the woods,
Because they see so few.)
You will hear the beat of a horse's feet,
And the swish of a skirt in the dew,
Steadily cantering through
The misty solitudes,
As though they perfectly knew
The old lost road through the woods.
But there is no road through the woods.

Prayers for All Who Teach and Learn



We pray for the children and staff of

- the educational settings in our Benefice
- the schools and colleges our children and young people attend
- the work of teachers and educators known to us or resident in our parishes

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

We pray for those with limited access to education

- the girls and young women of Afghanistan

- young people trapped in a cycle of poverty and low paid work
- children who are unwell, or whose schools are not accessible to those with disabilities or health conditions

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

We give thanks for the lives of Christine Patterson and Val Lloyd and pray for ourselves, on a journey of faith, that we may continue to learn more of God's great love for us:

God be in my head and in my understanding;

God be in mine eyes, and in my looking;

God be in my mouth, and in my speaking;

God be in my heart, and in my thinking;

God be at mine end, and at my departing.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

Silence

The Lord's Prayer

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

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.

The Collect

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. **Amen.**

The Conclusion

An Irish Blessing

May God give you, for every storm, a rainbow,
for every tear, a smile,
for every care, a promise and a blessing in each trial.
For every problem life sends,
a faithful friend to share,
for every sign a sweet song,
and an answer for each prayer. **Amen.**

We turn to the open door and pray for the world

To a troubled world **peace from Christ.**

To a searching world **love from Christ.**

To a waiting world **hope from Christ. Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.