

THE TEMPLE CHURCH

Candlemas:
The Presentation of Christ in the Temple
Wednesday 28 January 2026, 6.00 p.m.



Fra Angelico, The Presentation in the Temple
(from the predella of the Annunciation Altarpiece, Prado, Madrid)

CHORAL EVENSONG

At the Anniversary of the Consecration of the
Round Church by the Patriarch of Jerusalem,
Candlemas 1185

‘FOSTER-CHILD OF SILENCE AND SLOW TIME’: THE ROUND CHURCH AND ITS CONSECRATION

At Candlemas 1185 Heraclius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, processed into the Round for the church's consecration. The King was almost certainly present. The Round was proudly modern. Already in use by 1162, it was the first Gothic building in England, with the first free-standing Purbeck marble columns. A chancel, some two thirds of the present chancel's length, stretched to the east where we are gathered this evening.

The Round evokes two of the most sacred buildings in medieval Christendom.

The Templars were charged with the protection of pilgrims to the Holy Land. Jerusalem lies at the centre of all medieval maps, and was the centre of the crusaders' world. The most sacred place in this most sacred city was the site of Jesus' own burial: the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Here the crusaders inherited a round church. It was the goal of every pilgrim. In the early 4th century the Emperor Constantine and his mother the Empress Helena had rediscovered the site of Christ's burial and, just yards away, the True Cross. Constantine built there the rotunda and basilica of the Holy Sepulchre. This vast complex was destroyed in 1009; it was (in a more modest form) soon rebuilt and was then reconstructed by the Crusaders in the 1160s and 70s. When you walk in to the Round at the end of this service you will, to the medieval mind, be walking out of London and into Jerusalem. You will be at the centre of the centre of the world.

The Templars themselves, meanwhile, were given as their headquarters the Aqsa Mosque on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, believed by the crusaders to be the Temple of Solomon; so they became known as the 'fellow soldiers of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem', or Templars. Aligned with the Moaque's axis is the Dome of the Rock, the beautiful domed octagon built by the Muslims in 691 to surpass the Holy Sepulchre's rotunda. This the crusaders believed to be the Temple of the Lord, in which Jesus was presented to the Lord at the first Candlemas. From the octagonal Temple of Christ's infancy to the rotunda of his Sepulchre: the whole span of Christ's earthly life was encapsulated in these two buildings. And at Candlemas 1185 Heraclius dedicated our own Round to the Virgin Mary who had brought her infant son to the Temple to be dedicated to the Lord and who would watch his death on the cross and his burial just half a mile away at the site of the Holy Sepulchre.

The sepulchre of Christ is like a womb; from there he is born more glorious than he was from his mother. Blessed is the body of our Lord Jesus Christ given birth by virginity and guarded by the justice of Joseph of Arimathea. For Joseph's grave guarded it without corruption, just as Mary's womb preserved it unimpaired. Everywhere sanctity is conferred on the blessed body, and everywhere virginity. A new womb conceived it, a new grave enclosed it. Therefore the womb that bore the Lord is virgin, and virgin is his sepulture. Or rather, the sepulture itself is a womb. For just as the Lord emerged alive from his mother's womb, so he rose alive from Joseph's tomb. Except, that this second nativity is more glorious than the first. The first brought forth a mortal body, the second an immortal. After the first he descends to hell, after the second he returns to heaven. – *Sermon formerly ascribed to St Augustine.*

Over 1,500 years after the Empress Helena was in Jerusalem, General Gordon, British and Protestant to the core, did not like all the superstitions of the Sepulchre and its sects, and to his great satisfaction discovered another tomb, half a mile away in a garden-grove, which he declared to be Christ's real sepulchre. He wrote to Queen Victoria, to tell her of his discovery. Her Majesty thanked him in reply, but said, 'We are content to accept the discovery made by our cousin Helena.' The Garden Tomb continues to attract pilgrims and visitors.

In summer 2014 the present Patriarch of Jerusalem was in London to call attention to the plight of Christians in the Holy Land and throughout the Middle East. It was a privilege to welcome His Holiness to the Temple Church, in the footsteps of his predecessor 829 years ago. The Patriarch apologised wryly for this long delay, asked for the prayers of us all and promised that he or a successor will be back before another eight centuries have passed.

Organ Prelude

Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr BWV 662

J. S. Bach (1685-1750)

All stand at the entrance of the choir and clergy.

INTROIT

Hail, gladdening Light, of his pure glory poured,
who is immortal Father, heavenly blest;
Holiest of Holies, Jesus Christ our Lord!
Now are we come to the sun's hour of rest;
the lights of evening round us shine,
we hymn the Father, Son and Holy Spirit divine.
Worthiest art thou at all times to be sung,
with undefilèd tongue,
Son of our God, Giver of life, alone!
Therefore in all the world thy glories, Lord, they own.
Amen.

Music: Charles Wood (1866-1926)

Words: Translated from 2nd or 3rd century Greek by J Keble, 1834

HYMN

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| <p>1.
Of the Father's heart begotten,
Ere the world from chaos rose,
He is Alpha: from that Fountain
All that is and hath been flows;
He is Omega, of all things
Yet to come the mystic Close,
<i>Evermore and evermore.</i></p> | <p>2.
By his word was all created;
He commanded and 'twas done;
Earth and sky and boundless ocean,
Universe of three in one,
All that sees the moon's soft radiance,
All that breathes beneath the sun,
<i>Evermore and evermore.</i></p> |
| <p>3.
Sing, ye heights of heaven, his praises;
Angels and archangels, sing!
Wheresoe'er ye be, ye faithful,
Let your joyous anthems ring,
Every tongue his name confessing,
Countless voices answering,
<i>Evermore and evermore.</i></p> | |

Music: 'Divinum mysterium', 13th century melody adapted in Piae Cantiones Theodorici Petri Nylandensis, 1582; descant by Sir David Willcocks (born 1919)

*Words: 'Corde natus ex parentis', Prudentius (348-413),
from Hymnus omnis Horae, translated by R. F. Davis (1866-1937)*

BIDDING PRAYER

The pilgrim Egeria, Jerusalem, AD 380: The fortieth day after the Epiphany is celebrated here with the very highest honour. On that day there is a procession, in which all take part, in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and all things are done in their order with the greatest joy, just as at Easter.

Praise be to thee, O Lord, for the gift of thy Son Jesus Christ, consecrated in thy Temple to the service of thy will and of thy world;

Praise be to thee for the light of the world at home among us to illumine our path through life and through death to thy glorious resurrection beyond;

Praise be to thee for this place of prayer, ancient and beautiful, dedicated to the mother of the Lord; for all those through the centuries who within these walls have raised their hearts, minds and voices to thy praise; for all those in this our generation who still gather here at this place of Christ's resurrection, this meeting-place of earth and heaven, this womb of thy new creation.

From The Golden Legend, 1280: This feast is called Candlemas. Every person bears this day a candle of wax, alight, which represents our Lord Jesus Christ. As the candle has three things in it, the wax, the wick, and the fire; so there are three things in Jesus Christ, that is the body, the soul and the godhead.

O who may make us understand, Mary, glorious Lady, the thoughts of your heart in giving your breast to your Son, in laying him down and raising him up, an infant born of you whom you knew to be God Almighty? You see him created that has created all the world; you see him as a powerless child who has power over all; you feed him that feeds all the world; you see him not speaking, that made both man and speech. O who could know the secrets of your heart, your courage when you held your child between your arms whom you love as your Lord? Who would not marvel at this miracle, when a virgin has given birth to her maker, the Lord of all the world?

All sit or kneel for the confession.

THE CONFESSION

Almighty and most merciful Father; We have erred, and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; And we have done those things which we ought not to have done; And there is no health in us. But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders. Spare thou them, O God, which confess their faults. Restore thou them that are penitent; According to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesu our Lord. And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake; That we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, To the glory of thy holy Name. Amen.

ABSOLUTION AND LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that 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.

All stand at 'Glory be.....'

THE RESPONSES (*Tomkins*)

PSALM 24 (*Garrett*)

The earth is the Lord's and all that therein is:

the compass of the world and they that dwell therein.

For he hath founded it up on the seas:

and prepared it upon the floods.

Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord:

or who shall rise up in his holy place?

Even he that hath clean hands and a pure heart:

and that hath not lift up his mind unto vanity nor sworn to deceive his neighbour.

He shall receive the blessing from the Lord:

and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

This is the generation of them that seek him:

even of them that seek thy face O Jacob.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up ye ever lasting doors:

and the King of glory shall come in.

Who is the King of glory:

it is the Lord strong and mighty, even the Lord mighty in battle.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors:

and the King of glory shall come in.

Who is the King of glory: even the Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be:

world without end. Amen.

All sit.

THE FIRST LESSON
Malachi 3. 1-5

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.

But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years.

And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts.

All remain seated.

OFFICE HYMN
Sung by the Choir

O Trinity of blessed light,
O Unity of princely might,
The fiery sun now goes his way,
Shed thou within our hearts thy ray.

To thee our morning song of praise,
To thee our evening prayer we raise;
O grant us with thy saints on high
To praise thee through eternity

To God the Father, heav'nly Light,
To Christ revealed in earthly night,
To God the Holy Ghost we raise
Our equal and unceasing praise.

Music: O Lux Beata, mode viii
Words: from the Latin, tr. J.M. Neale (1818-1866)

All stand.

MAGNIFICAT (*Fifth Service, Tomkins*)

All sit.

THE SECOND LESSON
Luke 2. 22-40

And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord;

(As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;) And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.

And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him. And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.

And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

All stand.

NUNC DIMITTIS (*Fifth Service, Tomkins*)

In the tradition of the Temple Church, we face east to say together:

THE CREED

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth: And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary, Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried, He descended into hell; The third day he rose

again from the dead, He ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost: The holy Catholick Church; The Communion of Saints; The Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body, And the Life everlasting. Amen.

All sit or kneel for the Collects, Versicles and Responses.

THE COLLECT

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.

THE ANTHEM

When to the temple Mary went
And brought the holy child,
Him did the aged Simeon see,
As it had been revealed.

He took up Jesus in his arms,
And blessing God, he said:
In peace I now depart,
My saviour having seen,
The hope of Israel,
The light of men.

Help now thy servants, gracious Lord,
That we may ever be
As once the faithful Simeon was,
Rejoicing but in thee;
And when we must from earth departure take,
May gently fall asleep, and with thee wake.

Music: Johannes Eccard (1533-1611)

Words: trans. John Troutbeck (1832-1899)

THE PRAYERS

All stand.

HYMN

**Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
Almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.**

**Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
Nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might;
Thy justice like mountains high soaring above
Thy clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.**

**To all life thou givest, to both great and small;
In all life thou livest, the true life of all;
We blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree,
And wither and perish; but naught changeth thee.**

**Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,
Thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;
All laud we would render: O help us to see
'Tis only the splendour of light hideth thee.**

*Music: "St Denio", Welsh Hymn Melody
Words: Walter Chalmers Smith (1824-1908)*

BLESSING

All are invited to sit after the departure of the Choir and Clergy for

THE ORGAN VOLUNTARY

Toccata in C BWV 564

J. S. Bach (1685-1750)

*Please join us for a drink in the Round after the service.
(A small donation to help cover our costs would be greatly appreciated.)*

There will be a retiring collection.

***If you would prefer to donate online the Church has a Just Giving page. For
donations this way, kindly use your phone to scan the QR code below.***

Thank you for your support of the Church!



SPECIAL HIGHLIGHTS FOR FEBRUARY AND MARCH

It would be lovely to see you again at some of these special events.

Tuesday 3 February, 6.00pm

THE MIDDLE TEMPLE TREASURER'S LECTURE

'Might, Right and Morality'

The Reverend Robin Griffith-Jones, *Master of the Temple*

Tickets required. For more information and to book,

www.middletemple.org.uk/events

Monday 9 February, 7.30pm

TEMPLE MUSIC FOUNDATION

CONCERT: FOUR LAST SONGS

Masabane Cecilia Rangwanasha *soprano*, Julius Drake *piano*

For more information and to book, www.templemusic.org

Wednesday 11 February, 6.00pm

CHORAL EVENSONG FOR ST VALENTINE'S DAY

AND IN THANKSGIVING FOR ALL THE WEDDINGS CELEBRATED AND

BLESSED AT THE TEMPLE CHURCH

Music to include: If ye love me (Tallis), I was glad (Parry), Zadok the Priest (Handel)

Tuesday 17 February, 7.00pm

MERLIN'S ISLE: A JOURNEY IN WORDS AND MUSIC

Malcolm Guite and the St Martin's Voices

Tickets: £15 (£10 concessions). For more information and to book,

www.canterburypress.hymnsam.co.uk/events

Wednesday 18 February, 6.00pm

CHORAL EVENSONG: ASH WEDNESDAY

Music to include: Nolo mortem peccatoris (Morley), Miserere mei (Allegri), Emendemus in Melius (Byrd)

Tuesday 24 February, 7.30pm
TEMPLE MUSIC FOUNDATION
CONCERT: THINGS INVISIBLE TO SEE
Hamish McLaren *countertenor*, Ana Beard Fernández *soprano*,
Matthew Jorysz *piano*
For more information and to book, www.templemusic.org

Wednesday 25 February, 6.00pm
CHORAL EVENSONG FOR ST DAVID'S DAY
Sung by The London Welsh Male Voice Choir
Tickets are not required.

Wednesday 4 March, 6.00pm
CHORAL EVENSONG
Temple Church Choir
with special guests, the Choir of Norwich Cathedral

Thursday 5 March, 9.00pm
COMPLINE

Wednesday 11 March
NO EVENSONG SERVICE THIS EVENING

Thursday 12 March, 7.30pm
TEMPLE MUSIC FOUNDATION
Bach: St John Passion
Thomas Allery *conductor*,
Temple Singers, Temple Players
For more information and to book: www.templemusic.org

SAFEGUARDING

If you have any concerns about safeguarding, the Safeguarding Officer can be contacted confidentially at safeguarding@templechurch.com or via 020 7427 5650.

The full Safeguarding Policy is available on the Temple Church website at <https://www.templechurch.com/safeguarding-policy>