

TODAY'S READINGS

First Reading: Malachi 3: 1-5

All who serve the people must first be one of them. From there the work of God proceeds, witnessing to the covenant, chastising evildoers and addressing the needs of the poor.

Second Reading: Hebrews 2: 14-18

The fullness of our humanity is often best lived out as part of a community, where our skills can be witnessed and used most creatively. So it was with Jesus, fully human as well as divine.

Gospel: Luke 2: 22-40

Jesus' true identity is acknowledged by two of the most worthy members of the community of the Temple. Youth and age meet and the promise of God to the witnesses is fulfilled.

FIRST READING Malachi 3. 1-5

Thus says the LORD God:

¹ See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight – indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts.

² But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap;

³ he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness.

⁴ Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

⁵ Then I will draw near to you for judgement; I will be swift to bear witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against

those who oppress the hired workers in their wages, the widow, and the orphan, against those who thrust aside the alien, and do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts.

SECOND READING Hebrews 2. 14-18

¹⁴ Since the children share flesh and blood, Jesus 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,

¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death.

¹⁶ For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham.

¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸ Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

GOSPEL Luke 2. 22-40

²² When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, Mary and Joseph brought Jesus up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord.

²³ (as it is written in the law of the Lord, 'Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord'),

²⁴ and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, 'a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.'

²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him.

²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah.

²⁷ Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law,

²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

²⁹ 'Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word;

³⁰ for my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹ which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.'

³³ And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him.

³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, 'This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed

³⁵ so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed – and a sword will pierce your own soul too.'

³⁶ There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage,

³⁷ then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day.

³⁸ At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

³⁹ When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth.

⁴⁰ The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him.

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.**

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

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.**

For Prayer:

“Lord, you have sent us a light to enlighten the nations, and yet still there are people who dwell in darkness. We pray for all the darkness in this world, and for those places where conflict makes it almost impossible to live in love with neighbours, even though without such love, there seems no peaceful end in sight.”

Pray for all who are experiencing trouble in their lives through ill health, financial worry or just finding it difficult to cope with what is ahead of them.

Remember in your prayers, all who have been recently bereaved, pray that they find strength from family and friends. In particular, those named on our prayer list.

Pray for our parish and all who work in it. Hope that they may find strength and guidance through prayer to bring the joy of what we have to offer to all who wish to receive it.

Take some time for a moment of personal prayer.

Those who are acutely sick: Claire Colman, Tim Fletcher, Vera Foster, Owen Goodwin, Roger Gray, Jan Price, Joan Thornton, Carole Sharp, John Sharp, Lindsey Westcott, Debbie Whitehead, Jill Williams.

Those with chronic or long-term illness: Jackie Briggs, Margaret Coles, Dorothy Duncanson, Pat Elves, Harry Henderson, Anna Johns, Vicky Johnston, Carol Muller, Roy Ray, Julia Sherlock, Bob Whitehead, Jim Wild.

Those who have died: Jack Geldard, Nic Hayes, Jean Hutton, Mary Law.

DURING THE WEEK

MONDAY	9.15am	Morning Prayer via Zoom
TUESDAY	9.15am	Morning Prayer at St Stephen's
	2.00pm	Funeral of t/l Mary Law at St Stephen's
	3.00pm	Committal of t/l Mary Law at Hemel Hempstead Crematorium
WEDNESDAY	9.15am	Holy Communion at St Stephen's
	10.30am	Tots & Teddies at St Julian's
	4.30pm	Organ Practice at St Stephen's
THURSDAY	9.15am	Morning Prayer at St Julian's
	10.30am	Community Café open at St Julian's
FRIDAY	10.30am	Community Shed meets at St Stephen's
SATURDAY		



St Stephen
with St Julian

Candlemas

1 February 2026

Welcome to St Stephen's and St Julian's. Whoever you are, wherever you've come from, you are welcome! If this is your first visit, please do introduce yourselves to the clergy and stay for coffee after the service to meet others.

SERVICES TODAY

8.00am	Holy Communion at St Stephens
9.30am	Holy Communion at St Julian's
10.00am	Parish Communion at St Stephen's
	President & Preacher: Sherine Angus
	Deacon: Hamish Hamilton
	Sunday Explorers at St Stephen's
	Sunday Tots at St Stephen's

Next Sunday – Second Sunday before Lent

8.00am	Holy Communion at St Stephens
9.30am	Holy Communion at St Julian's
10.00am	Parish Communion at St Stephen's

Link for 10.00am service at St Stephen's Church
<https://youtube.com/live/PVTkYne2OnQ?feature=share>

Link for Morning Prayer via Zoom link every **Monday**
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/8428425768?pwd=QaWzIPT4b5mV7a938AbNNYisZIYt3V.1>
Meeting ID: 842 8242 5768
Passcode: 792910