

# The Stratfield Mortimer Benefice of

St Saviour  
Mortimer West End

St Mary and St John  
Stratfield Mortimer

St John the Baptist  
Padworth

St Mary's Church of England School

St John's Church of England School

Diocese of Oxford



Simeon receives the Christ child presented to God in the Temple,  
Rembrandt

## The Parish Eucharist

on

### The Presentation of Christ in the Temple

*Trans. from 2<sup>nd</sup> February. Commonly known as*

### 'Candlemas'

**Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021 at 10.00 a.m.**

**online at zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6931233940>**

**Prayer Thought:** This Sunday we celebrate the close of the Christmas/Epiphany festival of light and normally candles are blessed and given out to remind us to carry the light of the Christ child and his enlightening message to the community and the world.

Every baby brings new hope. For her there are no regrets - no looking back and wishing things had been otherwise. She is an 'open book' with blank pages projecting into a future full of promise. Of course, if we look closely we may see dark clouds on the horizon. Will the child grow up to share a parent's tendency for health problems? Will she face poverty or famine or war? Quite soon the blank pages begin to fill and for some the text can appear forbidding. Of course, statistics and the balance of probabilities, whilst important, only tell us what is likely to happen and we can't actually measure a human life according to 'worldly' measures of success or failure.

This week's Gospel story tells how the parents of Jesus 'presented' their infant son at the Temple. Their act of dedication signifies how from the depths of their being they saw their child as a precious 'open book' who they wanted to be filled with hope and love and trust in God's goodness that all shall be well. At first sight this may seem to be the denial of freedom and the closing off of the possibility for the child to decide for himself how he wished to live his life. Yet the deeper message is that a child's life can not to be measured according to 'worldly' standards of success or failure and in achieving some set of goals - no matter how worthy - but that what ultimately matters is a 'Godly life' whereby we are free to love and to care for others as ourselves and to be good stewards of this world's wonderful gifts and treasures. This message, which might sound ironic, is that we are freed from the burden of worldly expectations of self-fulfilment when God's way becomes our fulfilment. God bless, Paul

# The Parish Eucharist

*The present rules and guidelines about attendance, singing & speaking in churches will be followed carefully.  
This Sunday only the priest and the zoom operator may be at St John's.*

## HYMN

O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness!  
Bow down before him, his glory proclaim;  
with gold of obedience, and incense of lowliness,  
kneel and adore him: the Lord is his Name!

Low at his feet lay thy burden of carefulness,  
high on his heart he will bear it for thee,  
and comfort thy sorrows, and answer thy prayerfulness,  
guiding thy steps as may best for thee be.

## THE GATHERING AND GREETING

*The greeting proclaims the presence of the Lord with us. The Penitential Rite, the Gloria and the Opening Prayer follow. The purpose of these preliminary rites is to help the people, gathered for the celebration of the Eucharist, to join with each other as a worshipping community, and to prepare to listen to the Word of God and to celebrate the Eucharist - the Great Thanksgiving.*

Priest In the name of God - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

All Amen.

The Lord be with you

All And also with you.

## PRAYERS OF PENITENCE

*We call to mind our sins to repent of them / turn from them and to ask forgiveness of God and each other.  
The Invitation to Confession*

Priest *The grace of God has dawned upon the world through our Saviour Jesus Christ. cf Titus 2: 11*

My dear brothers and sisters, as we come together as God's family and prepare to celebrate the Eucharist, let us acknowledge and confess our sins and seek the forgiveness of God through Jesus our Saviour.

*A pause for silent reflection follows.*

Lord, we have sinned against you:

Lord, have mercy.

All Lord, have mercy.

Lord, show us your mercy and love.

All And grant us your salvation.

*The Absolution and the acceptance of God's forgiveness.*

+ Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you your sins, and bring you to everlasting life.

All Amen.

## THE GLORIA

*Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo.*

*Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo.*

Glory to God in the highest,  
and peace to his people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father,  
we worship you, we give you thanks,  
we praise you for your glory.

*Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo.*

*Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo.*

**Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,  
Lord God, Lamb of God,  
you take away the sins of the world:  
have mercy on us;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:  
receive our prayer.  
*Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo.*  
*Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo.***

**For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.  
*Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo.*  
*Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo.***

### **THE COLLECT**

*Our priest invites us to pray.*

Priest            Let us pray.

*Together we spend a few moments in reverent silence realising that we are in the presence of God our Father to whom we make our prayers. The priest 'collects' our prayerful thoughts into theme of this Christmas Day celebration in the Opening Prayer, which is either sung or said.*

Priest            Almighty God, 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.  
All                **Amen.**

### **THE LITURGY OF THE WORD**

*The Liturgy of the Word consists of readings from the scriptures; a sermon/homily, which expounds the readings; the Profession of Faith, which is the Creed of God's people; and the Prayer of the Faithful or General Intercessions in which the people of God intercede for all humankind.*

*In the Liturgy of the Word God speaks to us of redemption and salvation and nourishes us with his word. We are not only listening to past history. The God who speaks to Israel and to the early Church speaks to us today through the power of the Holy Spirit working within us as we listen to him and as he reveals the pattern of his plan for our lives. 'The word of God is something alive and active: it cuts like any double edged sword but more finely...it can judge the secret emotions and thoughts' (The Letter to the Hebrews 4:12).*

### **THE FIRST READING - The Letter to the Hebrews 2: 14 - 18.**    Read by Mel Strag

Reader            A reading from The Letter to the Hebrews.

Since all the children share the same human nature, he too shared equally in it, so that by his death he could set aside him who held the power of death, namely the devil, and set free all those who had been held in slavery all their lives by the fear of death. For it was not the angels that he took to himself; he took to himself the line of Abraham. It was essential that he should in this way be made completely like his brothers so that he could become a compassionate and trustworthy high priest for their relationship to God, able to expiate the sins of the people. For the suffering he himself passed through while being put to the test enables him to help others when they are being put to the test.

*At the end of the reading:*

Reader            This is the word of the Lord.

All                **Thanks be to God.**

*Now we hear the Gospel (the Good News) and acknowledge that we are his people and called to be part of his mission to the world inasmuch as we share his message and his life with faith, hope and love.*

## THE GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.**

The light to enlighten the Gentiles  
And give glory to Israel, your people.

*Luke 2: 32*

**Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.**

## THE GOSPEL READING - LUKE 2: 22 - 40.

The Lord be with you.

**All** **And also with you .**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

**All** **Glory to you, O Lord.**

*The Presentation of Christ.*

When the day came for them to be purified in keeping with the Law of Moses, they took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord - observing what stands written in the Law of the Lord: Every first-born male must be consecrated to the Lord - and also to offer in sacrifice, in accordance with what is prescribed in the Law of the Lord, a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons. Now in Jerusalem there was a man named Simeon. He was an upright and devout man; he looked forward to Israel's comforting and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death until he had set eyes on the Christ of the Lord. Prompted by the Spirit he came to the Temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the Law required, he took him into his arms and blessed God; and he said:

'Now, Master, you can let your servant go in peace  
just as you promised;  
for my eyes have seen the salvation  
which you have prepared for all the nations to see,  
a light to enlighten the gentiles  
and the glory for your people Israel.'

As the child's father and mother stood there wondering at the things that were being said about him, Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, 'You see this child: he is destined for the fall and for the rising of many in Israel, destined to be a sign that is rejected - and a sword will pierce your soul too - so that the secret thoughts of many may be laid bare.'

There was a prophetess also, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was well on in years. Her days of girlhood over, she had been married for seven years before becoming a widow. She was now eighty-four years old and never left the Temple, serving God night and day with fasting and prayer. She came by just at that moment and began to praise God; and she spoke of the child to all who looked forward to the deliverance of Jerusalem.

When they had done everything the Law of the Lord required, they went back to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. Meanwhile the child grew to maturity, he was filled with wisdom; and God's favour was with him.

### *At the end of the Gospel*

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**All** **Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.**

## THE SERMON - Fr Derek

*We are a Eucharistic community in word and sacrament. Through the readings God has spoken to his people of his redeeming and healing love and of the nourishment which his Spirit gives. Our priest now reflects with us on the readings of the day relating them to our Eucharistic celebration and to our ordinary life.*

*After the sermon there is a short period of silent reflection.*

## THE PROFESSION OF CHRISTIAN FAITH - THE CREED

*We make the profession of faith in response to the word of God written in the Gospels and spoken in the sermon. We testify that God is our Father who gives us new life through his Son and who calls us together in the power of his Spirit to be a Eucharistic people, a 'thanksgiving people', a living community of his abiding love and care.*

**All** **We believe and trust in God the Father who made the world.**

**We believe and trust in his Son, Jesus Christ, who redeemed the world.**

**We believe and trust in the Holy Spirit who gives life to the people of God. Amen**

## THE PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL OR GENERAL INTERCESSION

*We are invited to pray for the needs of the Church and all people. Through baptism we have been made one with Christ, our great high priest, and we share in his intercessions before the Father for the needs of his Church and of all people. Our intercessions flow from our listening to the Gospel and sermon by which we have been made more aware of our Christian commitment.*

*This Prayer of the Faithful or General Intercession is announced and consists of a series of intercessions; we pray for the universal Church and its mission and for our bishop and for our benefice - our parishes, our two Church schools; for the world, for our Queen and country, for our local communities and families; for the sick and all in pain, for all who are working on the front line at this time of Covid 19; and for the departed. And in communion with Blessed Mary, St John the Evangelist, St John the Baptist and all the Saints of God we entrust one another and all people to God's saving love.*

Priest Let us pray to the Father through Christ our light and life.

*The deacon or leader continues.*

Father, your Christ is acclaimed as the glory of Israel: look in mercy on your Church's ministry of sharing his light... strengthen Justin our Archbishop, Steven our bishop, Olivia our area bishop, our benefice and our Federated Church Schools of St Mary's and St John's...

Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Father, your Christ in the Temple brings judgement on the world: look in mercy on the nations who long for his justice... bless and guide Elizabeth our Queen, our Government and our District and Village Councils...

Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Father, your Christ, who was rich, for our sake became poor: look in mercy on all who are in need and those who suffer with him ...

Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Father, your Christ is the one in whom faithful servants find their peace: hear our prayer as we remember before you...

Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Father, your Christ is the one destined for rejection: look in mercy on us as we turn towards his passion.

Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Priest Merciful Father, you kept faith with Simeon and Anna, and showed them the infant King.

**All Give us grace to trust your promises, and patience to wait for their fulfilment; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## THE LITURGY OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

*At the Last Supper Christ 'took some bread and when he had given thanks, broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying "This is my body which will be given for you; do this in remembrance of me". He did the same with the cup...' (Luke 22:19-20). The Church, joyfully obedient to the Lord's command, celebrates the Eucharist taking care that our 'liturgy' corresponds carefully to the words and actions of Christ: 1) Taking bread and wine in The Preparation of the Gifts we take our gifts to the Altar. Gifts or money for the poor and the Church's ministry to the poor are also presented. 2) Giving thanks (the meaning of the word Eucharist) in the Eucharistic Prayer the priest, in the name of us all, says the great hymn of our thanksgiving to God for the whole work of salvation, in which the offerings become the Body and Blood of Christ. 3) The breaking of the one bread is a sign of the unity of the faithful. 4) And in the giving of Holy Communion we receive the Body and Blood of Christ as the Apostles did from his hands. In this way Sunday by Sunday and day by day the Church carries out in loving obedience to his command what the Lord asked his disciples to do in remembrance of him.*

## THE PEACE

*We acknowledge and give thanks for our unity with one another in Jesus Christ our Lord, which his death and resurrection have brought to us. He is the peace between us. The sign of peace echoes Christ's own resurrection greeting to his disciples. Before we share in the same bread we express our love for one another and pray for peace and unity cf Luke 1.78,79.*

*cf Luke 1.78,79*

Priest In the tender mercy of our God the dayspring from on high has broken upon us, to give light to those who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

**All And also with you.**

## THE PREPARATION OF THE ALTAR

*The peoples' gifts of bread and wine are brought to the altar.*

*The offerings of money is made and promised to support the ministry and work of the Church.*

*Taking the Gifts: The priest gives thanks to God for the gifts in the following words.*

**Priest            BREAD**

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this bread to offer, which earth has given and human hands have made. It will become for us the bread of life.

**All                Blessed be God for ever.**

**WINE**

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this wine to offer, fruit of the vine and work of human hands. It will become for us the cup of salvation.

**All                Blessed be God for ever.**

**OUR TIME, TALENTS AND TREASURE/MONEY**

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have the gifts of our time, talents and money to offer. May our offerings of our gifts be a sincere sign of our gratitude and our dedication to your service.

**All                Blessed be God for ever.**

*The priest prays quietly: Lord God, we ask you to receive us and be pleased with the sacrifice we offer you with humble, contrite and thankful hearts. The priest washes hands as an expression of the desire for inward purification, praying quietly: Lord, wash away my iniquity; cleanse me from my sin.*

## PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS

**We are all invited to draw near in prayer:**

**Priest            Pray my brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the Almighty Father.**

**All                May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good, and the good of all his Church.**

**Priest            Amen.**

Father, in Christ there has sprung up a light for the righteous; accept the offering of your Church and grant that Christ may shine in us to the praise and glory of your name

**All                Amen.**

## THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

*The Eucharistic Prayer is the centre and high point of the whole Christian celebration. This great prayer of praise and thanksgiving proclaims the wonderful works of God and through it we join ourselves with Christ in praise and thanksgiving to God the Father and in offering ourselves to him in union with Christ's self-offering on the cross. We express our share in the prayer, which is said by the priest on behalf of all the people, by listening inwardly and joining in the acclamations (joyful shouts or songs) and the Sanctus (the Holy, Holy, Holy which concludes the preface), the memorial acclamation and the great 'Amen' which concludes our Eucharistic Prayer.*

**Priest            The Lord be with you.**

**All                And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**All                We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**All                It is right to give thanks and praise.**

*The Preface praises God for his mighty acts:*

It is indeed right and good, always and everywhere to give you thanks and praise through Jesus Christ, who is one with you from all eternity.

For on this day he appeared in the Temple

in substance of our flesh to come near to us in judgement.

He searches the hearts of all your people

and brings to light the image of your splendour.

Your servant Simeon acclaimed him as the light to lighten the nations,  
while Anna spoke of him to all who looked for your redemption.  
Destined for the falling and rising of many, he was lifted high upon the cross  
and a sword of sorrow pierced his mother's heart  
when by his sacrifice he made our peace with you.  
And now we rejoice and glorify your name that we, too, have seen your salvation  
and join with angels and archangels in their unending hymn of praise:

### *The Acclamation*

**All**            **Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

### *We pray to the Father for the sending down of the Holy Spirit and recall the Lord's Supper.*

Priest        We thank you, loving Father, because when we turned away you sent to us your Son Jesus Christ  
our Lord. He gave his life for us upon the cross. He shows us the way to live.  
Send your Holy Spirit that these gifts of bread and wine may be for us Christ's body and his  
blood. On the night before he died, when darkness had fallen, Jesus took bread.  
He gave thanks, broke it, and shared it with his disciples, saying:

    'This is my body, given for you. Do this to remember me.'

After they had eaten he took the cup of wine, gave thanks, and shared it with his disciples,  
saying:

    'This is my blood, poured out for you and for many, for the forgiveness of sins.

    Do this to remember me.'

So, Father, with this bread and this cup we celebrate his love, his death, his risen life.

As you feed us with these gifts, send your Holy Spirit upon us and change us more and more  
to be like Jesus our Saviour.

Help us, Father, to love one another, as we look forward to that day when suffering is ended  
and all creation is gathered in your loving arms.

And now with Mary, the Blessed Mother of our Lord, St John the Evangelist, St John the Baptist,  
and all your saints, we give you glory, through Jesus Christ and in the strength of your Holy  
Spirit, today and for ever.

**All**            **Amen.**

### **HOLY COMMUNION**

*The communion rite of the Church lays strong emphasis on peace, unity and our prayer for forgiveness. We come together to the Lord's table in accordance with the Lord's command, 'Take, eat... take, drink', as a community bound together by love. We are confident in Christ's mercy as we respond to his call to come to his table. Our communal recitation of the Lord's Prayer - the prayer he taught us - prepares us for Holy Communion with our Lord.*

### **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

Priest        Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Saviour gave us:

**All**            **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 BREAKING OF THE BREAD

*The priest takes the host and breaks it over the cup, praying quietly:*

*May this mingling of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ bring eternal life to us who receive it.*

*'Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread' (1 Corinthians 10:17)*

*Christ's gesture of breaking bread with his disciples at the Last Supper gave the entire Eucharist the name of the 'breaking of bread'. This gesture signifies that we who share one bread and one cup are made one. Through the breaking of the host the Eucharist is seen more clearly as a sign of unity and charity since the one bread is being distributed among the members of one family of God.*

Priest            We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

All                **Though we are many, we are one body, because we all share in one bread.**

*The priest prepares quietly for Holy Communion. We may all join quietly in this prayer:*

*Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, by the will of the Father and the work of the Holy Spirit your death brought life to the world. By your holy body and blood free me from all my sins and from every evil. Keep me faithful to your teaching, and never let me be parted from you.*

## PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION

Priest            Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.        *cf. John 1: 29*

Blessed are those who are called to his supper.

All                **Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word, and I shall be healed.**

*The sign of communion is more complete when given under both kinds since then the sign of the eucharistic meal appears more clearly. However, we live in exceptional times when, for the time being, communion can only be given in one kind for those who can come to church. Whilst others join faithfully online. Please God, may we all soon be able to come together again to receive Holy Communion under both kinds at the Lord's table. The priest takes the host, raises it a little and shows it saying: The Body of Christ. And the same with the cup saying: The Blood of Christ.*

*When receiving Holy Communion the response and assent to Christ is:*

+ **Amen.**

## ANTHEM DURING HOLY COMMUNION

**Ave Maria** (Gounod)

*The vessels are cleansed and put away. You may wish to join with the priest who prays quietly:*

*Lord, may these gifts give me purity of heart. May they bring me healing and strength, now and ever. Amen*

*After Holy Communion we may keep a further period of silence.*

## PRAYER AFTER HOLY COMMUNION

Priest            Let us pray

*The priest invites us all to pray that the Holy Eucharist will have its effect in transforming our lives and bring us to God's kingdom. All pray together silently for a while before the Post Communion prayer.*

Priest            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.

All                **Amen.**

## THE NOTICES FOR THE COMMUNITY ARE GIVEN.

### THE CONCLUDING RITE

Priest            The Lord be with you.

All                **and also with you.**

### THE BLESSING

Priest            Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus,  
who was wounded for our sins,  
that you may bear in your life the love and joy and peace  
which are the marks of Jesus in his disciples;



+ and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always.

**All** Amen.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**All** Thanks be to God.

### **HYMN**

**Love divine, all loves excelling,  
Joy of heaven to earth come down,  
Fix in us thy humble dwelling,  
All thy faithful mercies crown.  
Jesus, thou art all compassion,  
Pure unbounded love thou art;  
Visit us with thy salvation,  
Enter every trembling heart.**

**Come, Almighty to deliver,  
Let us all thy life receive;  
Suddenly return, and never,  
Never more thy temples leave.  
Thee, we would be always blessing,  
Serve thee as thy hosts above,  
Pray, and praise thee, without ceasing,  
Glory in thy perfect love.**

